



A Syrian immigrant holds a crossed out depiction of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad during a rally against his regime.
(AP Photo/Darko Vojinovic)

Syria's Homs

BASSEM MROUE
Associated Press
BEIRUT (AP) — Tens of thousands of defiant Syrian protesters thronged the streets of Homs Tuesday, calling for the execution of President Bashar Assad shortly after his army pulled its tanks back and allowed Arab League monitors in for the first time to the city at the heart of the anti-government uprising.

The pullback was the first sign the regime was complying with the League's plan to end the 9-month-old crackdown on mostly unarmed and peaceful protesters.

Yet amateur video released by activists showed forces firing on protesters even while the monitors were inside the city. One of the observers walked with an elderly man who pointed with his cane to a fresh pool of blood on the street that he said had been shed by his son, killed a day earlier.

The man, wearing a red-and-white checkered headdress, then called for the monitor to walk ahead to "see the blood of my second son" also killed in the onslaught.

Continued on Page 2

It's Not about The Money



Republicans spend millions, attack rivals in Iowa

Residents pose for a photo in front of the campaign bus of Republican presidential candidate, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, during a campaign stop at the Dubuque Golf and Country Club in Dubuque, Iowa, Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2011. Republican presidential candidates vying to challenge President Barack Obama next year are spending millions on television commercials and making final appeals to voters as they count down to the country's first nominating contest in Iowa on Jan. 3.

(AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

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Republicans spend millions, attack rivals in Iowa

Continued from front

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Republican presidential candidates vying to challenge President Barack Obama next year are spending millions on television commercials and making final appeals to voters as they count down to the country's first nominating contest in Iowa on Jan. 3.

The Midwestern state holds the country's first nominating contest on Jan. 3 — statewide precinct caucus meetings. They likely will winnow the seven-person field and shape the coming six-month string of state-by-state primary elections and caucuses leading up to the Republican National Convention that officially names a candidate in August.

Obama is vulnerable because of national dissatisfaction with the wobbly economy that has been extremely slow to pull out of the Great Recession. But the tangle of Republicans vying for the nomination to challenge the president in November — and fundamental splits over ideology — have left the party divided.

Candidates and allied groups have spent more than \$12 million on television commercials to air through caucus day next Tuesday.

National front-runner Mitt Romney, the former Massachusetts governor, is disliked and not trusted by conservative Republicans who have thrown their support behind a series of other candidates whose policy promises are more palatable to them.

But each of those candidates, Rep. Michele Bachmann, Texas Gov. Rick Perry, former businessman Herman Cain and now former House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich have all grabbed support and quickly risen in the polls before losing steam under closer scrutiny by voters and the news media.

Most of Romney's rivals preceded him into the state during the day at the

end of a holiday lull, seeking support in caucuses that are likely to dispatch one or more of them to a hasty campaign exit.

Attacking in waves, Romney's Republican presidential rivals cast him as unreliable on central conservative issues such as taxes and gay marriage — both of which they dislike — in the final, intensifying phase of a costly Iowa caucus campaign.

"I've been a conservative all my life," said Gingrich. He called Romney a "Massachusetts moderate ... who campaigned to the left of Teddy Kennedy." Romney countered: "I think I'm going to get the nomination if we do our job right."

In Dubuque, the first stop of a bus tour through the state, Gingrich said his own economic proposal for an optional flat-tax as well as the elimination of all capi-



Republican presidential candidate Rep. Michele Bachmann, R-Minn, left, is toasted during a campaign stop at the home of Robin Read, right, Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2011, in Shenandoah, Iowa. (AP Photo/Eric Gay)

tal gains taxes was a more pro-growth approach than Romney's prescription.

In a radio interview, former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum said Romney had "sort of gotten a pass" when he said in a recent debate he had done all he could as Massachusetts governor to block same-sex marriages in the state. Recent soundings suggest Texas Rep. Ron Paul is Romney's likeliest threat in Iowa. He is due in the state on Wednesday.

A conservative with libertarian leanings, Paul commands strong allegiance from his own supporters but appears to have little potential to expand his appeal and emerge as a serious challenger for the nomination.

Unlike his rivals and most Republican voters, he says the federal government should have no authority to ban abortion. □

Despite Arab League's visit, Homs still under siege

Continued from front

"Where is justice? Where are the Arabs?" the old man shouted in pain.

Syrian tanks had been heavily shelling Homs for days, residents and activists said, killing dozens even after Assad signed on early last week to the Arab League plan, which demands the government remove its security forces and heavy weapons from city streets, start talks with opposition leaders and allow human rights workers and journalists into the country.

But a few hours before the arrival of the monitors, who began work Tuesday to ensure Syria complies with the League's plan, the army stopped the bombardment and pulled some of its tanks back.

The British-based activist group Syrian Observatory for Human Rights confirmed that government forces fired on protesters while the monitors were inside Homs and said at two people were killed from the fire.

About 60 monitors arrived



This image made from amateur video and released by Shaam News Network Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2011 purports to show a woman mourning over a close relative in Homs, Syria. (AP Photo/Sham News Network via APTN)

in Syria Monday night — the first foreign observers Syria has allowed in since March, when the uprising against Assad's authoritarian rule began. The League said a team of 12 visited Homs.

After agreeing to the

League's pullback plan on Dec. 19, the regime intensified its crackdown on dissent; government troops killed hundreds in the past week and Syria was condemned internationally for flouting the spirit of the agreement.

On Monday alone, security forces killed at least 42 people, most of them in Homs. Activists said security forces killed at least 16 people Tuesday, including six in Homs.

One group put Tuesday's toll at 30, including 13 in Homs province.

Different groups often give varying tolls. With foreign journalists and human rights groups barred from the country, they are virtually impossible to verify.

Amateur videos show residents of Homs pleading with the visiting monitors for protection.

"We are unarmed people who are dying," one resident shouts to one observer. Seconds later, shooting is heard from a distance as someone else screams: "We are being slaughtered here."

Given the intensified crackdown over the past week, the opposition has viewed Syria's agreement to the Arab League plan as a farce. Some even accuse the organization of 22 states of complicity in the killings. □

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Venezuela:

Chomsky urges release of judge

IAN JAMES

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — American intellectual Noam Chomsky on Wednesday called for the release of a judge who has been detained more than two years on corruption charges in Venezuela.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has called Chomsky an inspiration and has praised his criticisms of U.S. foreign policy. But Chomsky has publicly disagreed with Chavez on the prosecution of Judge Maria Lourdes Afiuni, who is under house arrest.

He said in his public letter released Wednesday that Afiuni "has suffered enough and should be released."

Afiuni infuriated Chavez when she freed a banker from prison while he was awaiting trial on charges of flouting the country's currency exchange controls. A day after her arrest on Dec. 10, 2009, Chavez said on television that she should face a maximum sentence of 30 years in prison.

The 48-year-old judge maintains she is innocent and has refused to enter the courtroom to stand trial. Her lawyer says authorities have presented no evidence of corruption. □

In February, Afiuni was moved from jail to house arrest due to health problems.

In his letter, Chomsky suggested that the president's annual pardons at Christmastime would be "an appropriate occasion for President Chavez to correct an injustice and avoid greater damage to her health by a humanitarian release." Chomsky said that Chavez recently "demonstrated his humanitarian and generous spirit" by mediating to help free two American hikers who were detained by Iranian authorities.

"Through this letter to the Venezuelan people I encourage him to act in a manner consistent with the humanitarian values professed by the Bolivarian Revolution and end Judge Afiuni's imprisonment," wrote Chomsky, an 83-year-old professor emeritus of linguistics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

There was no immediate response from Venezuelan authorities. A judge earlier this month granted a request by prosecutors to extend Afiuni's detention for two more years. Charlie Clements, executive director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard University, said human rights advocates have recently had conversations with Venezuelan officials about Afiuni's case. □

Democrats hurting as US senator plans to retire

GRANT SCHULTE

LARRY MARGASAK

Associated Press

LINCOLN, Nebraska (AP) —

Democrats suffered a significant setback to efforts to keep control of the U.S. Senate on Tuesday as Sen. Ben Nelson said he will retire rather than seek a third term next year.

The 70-year-old conservative Democrat, whose seat is being heavily targeted by Republicans in 2012, said in a statement that "it's time for me to step away from elective office, spend more time with my family, and look for new ways to serve our state and nation."

Republicans, who need to net four seats to take back the Senate next year, say Nebraska has tilted further to the right in recent years. Nelson is the lone Democrat among the state's five-member congressional delegation.

Nelson recently expressed dismay about a divided Congress' inability to pass meaningful legislation, frustration that echoed in his statement Tuesday. He said public office is "about promoting the common good, not the agenda of the radical right or the radical left." Even as Nelson wavered about whether to seek another term, he piled up campaign cash, hired a campaign manager and watched his party spend more than \$1 million on ads supporting him. Prominent Nebraska Democrats said they were shocked



U.S. Sen. Ben Nelson, D-Neb., announces his retirement from the U.S. Senate, Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2011 outside of his home in Omaha, Neb. Nelson said he will retire rather than seek a third term next year, dealing a significant setback to Democratic efforts to maintain control of the chamber.

(AP Photo/Dave Weaver)

by his announcement and said they were concerned about who they might field against the Republican nominee.

Nelson's vote in favor of Obama's signature health reform measure left Nebraska Republicans confident that they could beat him next year.

The health reforms are strongly opposed by many Nebraska conservatives, and after the vote Republicans immediately launched a "Give Ben the

Boot" campaign.

"For once Senator Nelson has listened to Nebraskans," Nebraska Republican Party Chairman Mark Fahleson said Tuesday. "The Nebraska Republican Party is more focused than ever on electing another conservative Republican to join Sen. Mike Johanns and recapturing the U.S. Senate so that we can reverse the damage done by Ben Nelson, Washington Democrats and the Obama Administration." □





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Slain Ind. girl's grandfather was sex offender

FORT WAYNE, Ind. (AP) —

To assist her dying father, Tarah Souders made a choice: She moved her three young girls to a run-down trailer park in rural Indiana to help take care of him as his lungs rotted from emphysema.

She knew it could be dangerous. The park of about two dozen homes was teeming with convicted sex offenders, with one living at nearly every address. She worried about neighbors with sex offense records who had been helping her father get by, according to trailer park residents. And before she arrived, she even asked her father if her children could be at risk for abuse from two specific men — including a suspect now accused in her daughter's death.

"He said, 'No. They will not touch your children. They're doing everything they're supposed to do,'" said Greg Shumaker, one of 15 convicted sex offenders who live at the park and the other man that Souders had inquired about.

Weeks later, police say, a horrific tragedy unfolded. Her 9-year-old daughter, Aliahna Lemmon, was brutally killed. Police say 39-year-old Michael Plumadore told investigators that he bludgeoned her to death with a brick, then dismembered her and hid her head, hands and feet at her grandfather's trailer before dumping the other remains elsewhere.

Shumaker said Aliahna's



An undated Allen County (Ind.) Sheriff's Department photo shows Mike Plumadore. Authorities said Monday night, Dec. 26, 2011 that Aliahna Lemmon had been found dead and Plumadore, 39, who was watching Aliahna and her two sisters when she went missing Friday, was being held on a murder charge.

(AP Photo)



This undated file photo provided by the Allen County Sheriff's Department shows Aliahna Lemmon. Lemmon, 9, has been found dead, and the neighbor who was watching her before she disappeared was arrested on a murder charge Monday night, Dec. 26, 2011, authorities said, and was formally charged with murder Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2011.

(AP Photo/Allen County Sheriff's Department/file)

family moved there to help take care of 66-year-old James E. "Shorty" Lemmon, who also was a convicted sex offender and died Dec. 3. He said Lemmon was "getting old" and "had trouble breathing."

Shumaker said he introduced Plumadore to Lemmon shortly after Plumadore moved into the trailer park, and Plumadore moved in with Lemmon a few days later. Shumaker said he knew Lemmon because they were both sex offenders and were in jail together. Sheriff's department spokesman Cpl. Jeremy Tinkel confirmed that Lemmon was a sex offender. Indiana Department of Correction records show he was convicted of child molesting in March 2006.

Paulette Hair, 45, a former manager at the trailer park who lives at a nearby trailer park, said she also knew Lemmon was a sex offender. "He stayed out of everybody's way," she said. "Shorty couldn't take care of himself very well."

A man who answered the door at Souders' home Tuesday afternoon referred all questions to the Allen County sheriff's department. The home was one of only a few at the trailer park — located off an expressway and across from an open field — that displayed outward signs of children: A small bicycle, play car and cars seat sat on the wooden porch connected to a long wooden ramp. □

Anti-Semitism claims against UC Berkeley now dismissed

BERKELEY, California (AP) — A federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit filed by two Jewish students who claimed the University of California, Berkeley, fostered an atmosphere of anti-Semitism by not doing enough to curb alleged harassment during pro-Palestinian protests that included mock checkpoints.

Plaintiff Jessica Felber claimed in the lawsuit that a leader of a campus pro-Palestinian group rammed her with a shopping cart as she staged a counter-protest to "Apartheid Week," an annual event that compares Israel's policies to the institutionalized racism of South Africa's former white government.

Felber, who graduated last year, and current undergraduate Brian Maissy sued in March to demand the university enact rules to curb what they called ongoing harassment that they said amounted to a violation of their First Amendment rights to freedom of religion and speech.

Much of the alleged harassment, even if true, constituted protected political speech, San Francisco U.S. District Judge Richard Seeborg wrote in dismissing the case against the university Thursday.

Seeborg found that the university itself did not violate the plaintiffs' constitutional rights. Furthermore, he said UC Berkeley did not have a legal obligation to intervene in any dispute in which a private individual was allegedly interfering with those rights.

"The incident in which Felber was assaulted with a shopping cart, for example, did not occur in the context of her educational pursuits," Seeborg wrote.

"Rather, that event occurred when she, as one person attempting to exercise free speech rights in a public forum was allegedly attacked by another person who likewise was participating in a public protest in a public forum."

Joel Siegal, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, told the San Francisco Chronicle his clients were reviewing their options and that the suit had stimulated dialogue about acceptable conduct at the university.

In the Apartheid Week protests as described in the lawsuit, students dressed as soldiers carry fake assault weapons and demand to know whether passing students are Jewish. Felber said she required medical attention as a result of the shopping cart incident and obtained a permanent restraining order against the alleged assailant.

The plaintiffs cited what they said was a long history of harassment of Jewish students by Muslim and pro-Palestinian student groups on UC campuses.

Among those is a high-profile case in Orange County, where 10 Muslim students were convicted of misdemeanors for disrupting a speech given by an Israeli ambassador last year at UC Irvine. The students appealed, arguing that the law used to convict them was vague and unconstitutional. □

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Suit in US bullying case now settled

NORTHAMPTON, Massachusetts (AP) — A lawsuit brought by the parents of Phoebe Prince, a 15-year-old Irish immigrant in Massachusetts who committed suicide after relentless bullying, was settled for \$225,000, according to documents made public Tuesday.

The settlement with the town of South Hadley and its school department was reached more than a year ago, but the details were kept under wraps until a journalist won a court order for the release of the information.

The documents show that Prince's parents settled claims against the town and its school department for \$225,000. In return, the parents promised to release the plaintiffs from any further claims.

The documents were released by the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, which represented Slate reporter Emily Bazelon in her bid to for the disclosure of the settlement. □

Authorities identify 7 dead in Christmas shootings

**DANNY ROBBINS
JAMIE STENGLE**

Associated Press

GRAPEVINE, Texas (AP) — A

man facing marital and financial problems killed his estranged wife, two teenage children and three other family members on Christmas Day while dressed as Santa Claus before turning the gun on himself, authorities said Tuesday. It appeared they had been opening presents around their Christmas tree just before the attack. The Iran-born Aziz Yazdanpanah became the focus of detectives after his sport utility vehicle was found outside the apartment, and police believe he made a silent call to emergency services.

"The Persian community is devastated," said Mashy Modjdehi, a friend of both Yazdanpanah's wife of 24 years, Fatemah Rahmati, and her sister, Zohreh, who also was killed.

Modjdehi called the two sisters "the nicest people in the world — angels." Rahmati filed for bankruptcy in August 2010 and separated from Yazdanpanah in the midst of the bankruptcy. Her attorney, George Barnes, said his notes show that Rahmati told him, "Please don't talk to the

husband at all."

Barnes said Yazdanpanah initially accompanied his wife to meetings related to the bankruptcy and listed

unemployed, his wife held down jobs at two spas, the friend said. "She worked hard to keep the family together, but he wasn't will-

street, said he was unaware that Yazdanpanah's wife and children had moved out. Ditmars said the entire family was around last



Grapevine police investigate the scene where they found seven people dead outside Dallas in Grapevine, Texas. A man facing marital and financial problems killed his estranged wife, two teenage children and three other family members on Christmas Day while dressed as Santa Claus before turning the gun on himself, authorities said Tuesday. (AP Photo/The Dallas Morning News, Michael Ainsworth)

his occupation as "self-employed." Modjdehi said the family's financial troubles intensified about four years ago when Yazdanpanah stopped working in the mortgage business. Modjdehi said Yazdanpanah had long forbid Rahmati to work. But once he became

ing to do anything," Modjdehi said.

After the 2010 bankruptcy was dismissed, Yazdanpanah, often referred to as "Bob," remained in the home.

Neighbors said there were few signs of discord. Fred Ditmars, who lives across the

summer for a series of garage sales, and Yazdanpanah volunteered at a high school debate tournament where his daughter was a participant.

"He was, from everything that we saw, actively engaged with his children," Ditmars said. □



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Ambitious Northeastern expanding its geographical reach

TAMAR LEWIN
 © 2011 New York Times

After a century firmly anchored in Boston, Northeastern University is branching out – becoming Southeastern, Northwestern and perhaps Western and Midwestern as well. Northeastern, known for its co-op program in which undergraduates spend significant amounts of time in the workplace, opened its first satellite campus this fall in Charlotte, N.C., and is planning a second in Seattle next year; outposts in Austin, Texas, Minnesota and Silicon Valley are under discussion. The goal is to offer master's degrees in industries like cybersecurity, health informatics and project management, matching programs with each city's industries and labor needs, through a mix of virtual learning and fly-ins from professors based in Boston

(tuition will be the same as at the main campus). While higher education has long been seen as a local enterprise, with universities deeply enmeshed in their communities, the explosion of online institutions, particularly for-profit career colleges like the University of Phoenix and the Education Management Corp., has changed that dynamic. Northeastern, which is spending \$60 million to support the expansion, is perhaps the most ambitious of a handful of brick-and-mortar institutions looking to broaden their footprint in new markets and with new methods of instruction as they worry about maintaining enrollment and controlling costs. "This is a time of huge transition in an industry that hasn't changed much since the Middle Ages," said Charles P. Bird, a former vice president of Ohio



Cheryl Richards, left, a regional dean for Northeastern University, speaks with Pat Riley while giving a tour of the new satellite campus in Charlotte, N.C. Northeastern, based in Boston, is branching out to satellite campuses across the nation to offer master's programs that are designed to mesh with each city's industries and labor needs.

(John W. Adkisson/The New York Times)

University who helped develop the institution's online offerings and now works as a consultant. "Higher education is going from traditional face-to-face delivery, and the unexam-

ined assumption that that is good, to thinking about delivering a high-quality online experience, whether fully online or hybrid." Northeastern has hired 261 tenured and tenure-track

professors in the past five years, about twice as many as in the previous five, and plans to add 200 in the next three years – all of whom will be based at the home campus in Boston. "There's been a real knowledge explosion that has created new industries with new needs for expertise," said Joseph E. Aoun, the university's president. "We don't want to make the mistake the railways did. They didn't think of themselves as being broadly in the transportation industry, so they missed the opportunity to build air travel. We're in the business of higher education, and where there's a new space, we want to step in." Until recently, most universities looking to expand have gone overseas, starting branches in regions where U.S.-style higher education is a huge draw: first in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, where oil revenues have paid for elaborate buildings and hefty bonuses for U.S. faculty members, and more recently China and Singapore. □



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U.S. clears path for Yemen chief to get care

MARK LANDLER
ERIC SCHMITT

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HONOLULU — The Obama administration has decided in principle to allow the embattled president of Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh, to enter the United States for medical treatment, subject to certain assurances, two administration officials said Monday. But those conditions — including a proposed itinerary — have not yet been submitted to the U.S. Embassy in Yemen, these officials said, and no visa has yet been issued to Saleh. The decision of whether to admit Yemen's longtime leader has stirred a vigorous debate within the administration, with some officials fearing sharp criticism for appearing to provide a safe haven for a reviled Arab figure responsible for the death of hundreds of anti-government protesters. The complex negotiations over Saleh's visa request, and conflicting reports over its progress, attest to the high stakes for the administration, which urgently wants to secure room for political progress in Yemen but does not want to allow Saleh to use a medical visit as a way to shore up his political posi-



Yemen President Ali Abdullah Saleh at the presidential palace in Sanaa, Yemen. The Obama administration has decided in principle to allow the embattled president of Yemen, Ali Abdullah Saleh, to enter the United States for medical treatment, subject to certain assurances, two administration officials said.
(Bryan Denton/The New York Times)

tion. Nor do they want to play into Saleh's penchant for keeping people off kilter. If allowed to enter, Saleh would be the first Arab leader to request, and to be granted, admission to the U.S. since political unrest began convulsing the region a year ago. One administration official said that there was no further "impediment" to issuing Saleh a visa and that he could arrive at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital as soon as the end of this week for additional treat-

ment of medical problems stemming from a near-fatal bomb blast in June at the mosque in his presidential complex. Although the administration had been concerned that approval would anger the many Yemenis eager to see Saleh prosecuted for the bloody clashes between security forces and protesters, some believe that giving him a way out of Yemen, even temporarily, could help smooth the way to elections next year and perhaps end a political crisis that has brought the

government of the impoverished nation to the brink of collapse.

"In the end, we felt there was enough good to be gained that it was worth managing the criticism that we'd get, including any comparisons to past episodes," said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the arrangement was still

being completed.

The official was referring to President Jimmy Carter's decision in 1979 to admit the ailing shah of Iran, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, into the U.S. for medical treatment. That so infuriated the Islamic revolutionaries who had overthrown the shah that they stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and took 52 Americans hostage. □

US teen, 2 others found dead in western Mexico

MARK STEVENSON
Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The body of a U.S. teenager has been found in the trunk of a burned-out car in western Mexico along with the bodies of two other youths. Prosecutors in Michoacan state say the car holding the remains of the three

young men was found on a roadside on Christmas Eve. The other two victims were Mexican men aged 21 and 24. All three were from or had family in the nearby village of Quiringuicharo, Michoacan. An employee of the prosecutors' office who was not

authorized to be quoted by name said Tuesday that the U.S. teen has been identified as 18-year-old Alexis Uriel Maron. The office had no information on his home town, but the Chicago Tribune reported he was from the Chicago area. □

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Iran threatens to block oil if West sets new sanctions

RICK GLADSTONE

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Iran warned Tuesday that it would block the Strait of Hormuz, the world's most important oil transit point, if Western powers attempt to impose an embargo on Iranian petroleum exports in their campaign to isolate the country over its suspect nuclear energy program. The warning, issued by Vice President Mohammad Reza Rahimi, came as Iran's naval forces were in the midst of a 10-day war games exercise in a vast area of the Arabian Sea and Gulf of Oman. The Strait of Hormuz, a narrow passage that connects the Gulf of Oman to the Persian Gulf, is the route for one third of the world's oil-tanker traffic.

"If Iran oil is banned not a single drop of oil will pass through Hormuz Strait," Rahimi was quoted as saying by the official Islamic Re-



A female employee of the Iranian Interior Ministry works on her computer, as a portrait of supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is seen on a screen, at the country's elections headquarters in Tehran, Iran, Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2011. Iran warned Tuesday that it would block the Strait of Hormuz, the world's most important oil transit point, if Western powers attempt to impose an embargo on Iranian petroleum exports in their campaign to isolate the country over its suspect nuclear energy program.

(AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)

public News Agency at a conference in Tehran. "We are not interested in any hostility. Our motto is friendship and brotherhood, but

Westerners are not willing to abandon their plots." Rahimi appeared to be referring to efforts under way by the United States and Euro-

pean Union to restrict Iran's ability to sell oil, its most important export, as part of their increasingly strict

economic sanctions in response to Iran's uranium enrichment program. Iran contends the program is purely peaceful, but a U.N. report issued last month raised the possibility that it is clandestinely working on a nuclear weapon and missile delivery system. EU ministers have said they will take up the question over whether to boycott Iranian oil in coming weeks, and the U.S. Congress passed a measure this month that could potentially choke Iranian oil exports. Although the United States does not buy Iran's oil, the measure could discourage other buyers, even those who have friendly relations with the United States, by restricting their access to the U.S. market if they do business with Iran's Central Bank, the principal conduit for Iranian oil transactions. □



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Afghanistan to disband irregular police force

MATTHEW ROSENBERG
ALISSA J. RUBIN

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KABUL, Afghanistan — Af-

ghan President Hamid Karzai has taken steps to disband a little-known, irregular police force financed by the U.S. military with members in at least four northern provinces. Some members of the force are former militiamen and thugs known as much for extorting money from ordinary citizens as for intimidating insurgents and upholding the law.

The decision by appeared aimed at stopping at least some of the militias that are beyond the control of his administration and could one day challenge the government. It also appeared to be an effort to constrain the independence of northern Afghanistan, where strongmen and power brokers, especially the governor of Balkh province, have often seemed to operate with

only nominal deference to the central government in Kabul. Additionally, it was a slap at NATO, which has

For Karzai, the potential long-term threat posed by an irregular police force outweighed any short-term



A member of the Critical Infrastructure Police prepares to escort village elders back to their homes following a lunch at their compound in the Charbolak district in the Balkh Province of Afghanistan. The Afghan president has taken steps to disband this irregular police force financed by the American military, some of them former militia members and thugs known for extorting ordinary citizens rather than intimidating insurgents and upholding the law.

(Bryan Denton/The New York Times)

had a hand in establishing this particular force, known as the Critical Infrastructure Police.

gains it could deliver, said Shaida M. Abdali, Afghanistan's deputy national security adviser. The force is

distinct from a far larger irregular police force, the Afghan Local Police, which Karzai is preserving, and which is under the control of the Interior Ministry.

"We don't want a force that is likely to be out of control. We don't want a force that will become a future security threat," Abdali said.

The Critical Infrastructure Police has members in Balkh, Kunduz, Jowzjan, and Faryab provinces, according to a letter sent this month to the governors of those provinces by Maj. Gen. Markus Kneip of Germany, the head of NATO's Regional Command North. Karzai's disbandment announcement, released Sunday, said the force also operates in Sar-i-Pul province. The force, officially set up in August by Regional Command North, was organized in part to fill a security gap, but it also appears to have been an effort to get control of the scores of

often lawless militia groups that intimidate residents in the region. In Kunduz province, for instance, local officials and tribal leaders said that many of the infrastructure police officers were simply militiamen renamed. Numbering 1,200 to 1,700 men, according to the estimates of local officials, the infrastructure police officers are untrained, mostly self-armed or armed by the strongmen who are their patrons. They do not wear uniforms. Formerly unpaid, the force's members used to routinely extort money, food, fuel and other support in areas under their jurisdiction. NATO then used a U.S. discretionary fund to pay monthly salaries of \$150 per officer and \$200 per commander, partly in hopes that they would stop such behavior. But it still happens, according to local police officials, one of whom described the force members as "thieves and lowlives." □

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Russian domestic political leader under Putin is reassigned

ELLEN BARRY
 © 2011 New York Times
MOSCOW – The Kremlin on Tuesday announced the reassignment of Vladislav Y. Surkov, the “gray cardinal” who has overseen Russia’s domestic political scene for more than a decade. The reassignment, made in the midst of a new protest movement against Vladimir Putin, Russia’s paramount leader, suggested that Putin is prepared to make changes in the tightly controlled system that emerged during his first and second presidential terms. Surkov, the deputy head of the president’s administration, is considered the architect of the system under Putin and his protege and successor as president, Dmitry Medvedev, which Surkov christened “sovereign democracy.” He will now oversee modernization and innovation as a deputy prime minister, but will take no role in domestic politics. Russia’s political system has come under unprecedented pressure this month from protesters who complain that elections offer them no alternative to Putin’s rigid model. Former finance minister Aleksei L. Kudrin, who this month presented himself as a potential leader for disgruntled liberals, said the move affecting Surkov suggests “political reforms are going to continue.” “I consider him one of the designers of the system,” Ku-



Vladislav Surkov speaks at a news conference in Moscow. Surkov, the deputy head of the Russian president’s administration, was reassigned on Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2011, in a move made in the midst of a protest movement against Vladimir Putin.
 (James Hill/The New York Times)

drin said in an interview with Kommersant-FM. “Now, the system is being reconsidered. Other organizers are needed, with other views on the political system.” Surkov, an advertising prodigy who was brought into government toward the end of the Yeltsin era, has argued for years that centralizing power in the Kremlin was a matter of survival after the 1990s. He acknowledged last year that “centralization has reached the limits of its capacity,” but attempts to cultivate new parties were often discontinued if they showed signs of slipping out of Kremlin control.

Asked Tuesday why he was leaving, Surkov responded: “Stabilization devours its young.” He went on to say that he had requested a reassignment. Asked whether he would take a role in settling down the protests, Surkov said no. “I am too odious for this brave new world,” he said, in a short interview with the Interfax news service. He then summed up his achievements at a reporter’s request. “I was among the people who helped President Yeltsin realize a peaceful transfer of power,” he said. “I was among those who helped President Putin stabilize the political system. I was among those who helped President Medvedev liberalize it.” “I hope I did not undermine my employers and my col-

leagues,” he said. “Democracy was preserved, renovated and by the acts of Dec. 22,” when Medvedev proposed a swathe of substantive political changes, “it was translated to a working state. I hope it will successfully make it through the trials ahead. It was good work. There were, of course, enough mistakes, but let’s talk about that another time.” -In September, billionaire Mikhail D. Prokhorov called a news conference where he called for Surkov’s ouster and described him as “a puppet master who long ago privatized the political system, who has long misinformed the Russian leadership about what is going on in the political system, puts pressure on the media, and tries to manipulate citizens’ opinions.” □

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For Wall Street deal-makers, sometimes it pays to be bad

STEVEN M. DAVIDOFF
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Instead of awarding F's for the worst deals and deal-making of the year, I am going to focus on two of the year's biggest buyouts. The first: J.Crew's \$3 billion buyout by its chief executive, Millard S. Drexler, and the private equity firms TPG Capital and Leonard Green & Partners. The second: Del Monte Foods' \$5.3 billion acquisition by Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co., Vestar Capital Partners and Centerview Capital. Both acquisitions showed that sometimes being bad

pays very well. In the J.Crew deal, Drexler spent seven weeks planning a management buyout of the retailer with TPG and Leonard Green before he informed the J.Crew board of his intentions. At the last minute the buyout group lowered the price it was offering, making a "take-it-or-leave-it" offer that appeared to cow the J.Crew board into a lower-price deal. The Delaware judge overseeing the litigation that was later brought over the matter observed that the conduct of Drexler and his friends was "icky."

In the case of Del Monte, the investment bank Barclays Capital, which was representing Del Monte, was accused of bringing together Del Monte's eventual private equity buyers, KKR, Vestar Capital Partners and Centerview, turning possible competing bidders into allies. Barclays subsequently moved from representing Del Monte to providing financing for the buyers. Another Delaware judge wrote a scathing opinion in which he questioned the conduct of both Barclays and the Del Monte board for allowing Barclays to arrange and finance this



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Two of the biggest deals of 2011, the buyouts of J.Crew and Del Monte Foods, were re-opened to bidders after shareholders sued, but the shabby conduct in both cases was relatively unpunished.
(Harry Campbell/The New York Times)

bidding consortium. In both deals, litigation was brought before the takeovers could be completed. As a remedy, both deals were reopened and new bidders were invited to ensure that there was full and open bidding for the companies. No new bidder emerged for either company. This was no surprise. In J.Crew's case, Drexler is the creative force behind the preppy clothing company. But Drexler repeatedly expressed his desire to work only with TPG and Leonard Green while sometimes saying halfheartedly that he might work with others. Without his cooperation, no other bidder was likely to appear. □



At the Westin Aruba Resort

Tiara Air Management and Employees Enjoy a Christmas Gala

Palm Beach – In his warm, informal address, Managing Director and CEO Alejandro Muyale welcomed the employees of General Air Services and Tiara Air to the Palm Beach ballroom, congratulating them on a year of growth and significant achievement.

Under his leadership, both companies almost doubled in size over the past few years, and while General Air Services now handles most incoming flights at Reina Beatrix Airport Tiara Air grew to include additional destination and best of all now boast a new aircraft, and a second one is on the way, a Boeing 737 named Arawak, painted in the official Aruba logo and colors, which allows the airliner to fly bigger distances increasing its passenger count, to Curaçao, Bonaire, various destination in Colombia & two airports in Venezuela.

The evening's awards ceremony was emceed by Nelio Gomes Da Silva. Alejandro Muyale and Anouska de Cuba presented top Tiara Air performer with a plaque, and a gift.

As Employee of the Year for Tiara Air, Mike Hagedorn outshone and outperformed all others with his efforts to prepare and train new cabin crews for the growing airline, making sure the new cabin personnel is mentally and professionally ready to handle passengers and safety procedures. Pictured here Mike and Tiara Air management.

The Westin culinary team served a spectacular holiday buffet and Tsunami entertained, filling the dance floor with the airline's employees, reservations agents, as well as Jet-Blue, Delta and United Airlines representatives. □



PWC Meets Santa at Garufa Ultra Lounge



Oranjestad - The crew of PWC met Santa at Garufa Ultra Lounge having enjoyed a great dinner party at El Gaucho Argentine Grill. Santa

was personally delivering gifts to all Tax, Assurance, Advisory and Business Accounting Services, team members. Nevertheless, after receiving their envelopes, true to their analytical minds, they tried to challenge Santa, giving him an accounting audit and a technical evaluation with questions such as, how does he manage the visit approximately 378 million children in just 31 hours – taking into consideration different time zones -- sliding down and then up 967.7 chimneys per second, having parked the sleigh, filled stockings, distributed the remaining presents under the tree, eaten whatever snacks have been left for him, then jumped back into



the sleigh to get on to the next house. The auditors just couldn't believe his around-the-world 75.5 million mile trip report, not counting bathroom stops and breaks! Pictured here the team from Tax,



Assurance, Advisory and Business Accounting Services, helping Santa to work smarter, navigating the risks and regulations, positioning him to pull ahead of his competition in 2012. □

Aruhiba, The 1 and Only Homemade Aruban Cigar



ORANJESTAD- Benjamin Petrocchi started the newest export product of Aruba, locally produced cigars called "Aruhiba". These cigars are produced and cultivated in Aruba. Petrocchi has always had an interest in the cigar business and has also sold Premium Cuban Cigars, and now he is growing his own tobacco crop. After many attempts and trips to Santo Domingo and Cuba he started his own production and cultivation of Aruhiba Cigars in Aruba. The process took ten years. Petrocchi dedication to the cigars is important for the molding and process of making a perfect cigar which takes a long time. The cigar box is



specially designed for the cigars with the logo "Aruhiba". Petrocchi considers Aruhiba a promotion for Aruba through fine quality cigars. The company sells International cigars as well. Buy a gift box of Aruhiba Corona with five cigars and you will get 1 FREE cigar of \$35. Located at the Historic Dutch Windmill. Open from Monday to Saturday from 9am till

8:30pm. And open on Sunday from 9am to 1pm. Aruhiba is only available in above mentioned stores. Visit our authentic tobacco farm where cigars are hand-made. For tour to the tabaco factory call: 586-0347 buy & receive one Aruban cigar free with this article. Address: soledad 14-a, noord • tel: (297) 593-6177 • bap59@live.com □

Spectacular firework show at midnight and tsunami band

Celebrate 2012 at Marriott's "Blue Moon New Year's Eve" party

PALM BEACH – On December 31st 2011 you are invited to open the New Year at the Aruba Marriott's Blue Moon New Years Eve party at Tradewinds Beach. The festivities start at 10:00 pm until 1:00 am with a magnificent firework show at midnight and live entertainment provided by popular Aruban band Tsunami. It has become a tradition to open the New Year out on the beach at the Marriott for guests and locals. A promising light show is provided by Elite Productions, decorations by Every Events & Flortiek by Wilson and cash bars are avail-

able offering premium liquors and champagnes. Entrance fee to this spectacular beach party is \$20.00 and includes party favors. Tickets are available in the lobby of the Aruba Marriott Resort, Ocean and Surf Club daily from 10:00 am – 6:00 pm. Doors for the Blue Moon Beach party open at 9:00 pm. Don't miss out and get your tickets for Marriott's spectacular New Years Eve party to celebrate. The Aruba Marriottbanquetsstafflooks forward to see you this New Years Eve to toast to 2012! Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino boasts 411

guestrooms each with private balconies overlooking cascading waterfalls, a free form swimming pool and tranquil Caribbean waters. Guest exclusivity is attainable on the eighth floor through the Tradewinds Club, a boutique, 'hotel-within-a-hotel' concept that is paired perfectly with the new adults-only pool and lounge area. On property dining options range from light to elegant with seven restaurants and cafes, while entertainment and relaxation can be achieved in the island's largest casino, or in the 6,500 square-foot spa.□





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Aruba's 1st Pink Party with a noble cause at Salvatore Ferragamo/Montblanc



PALM BEACH PLAZA - Luxury brands Salvatore Ferragamo and Montblanc recently united with the X-clusivo, the prestigious magazine publication of Aruba and hosted a grand event named "Aruba's 1st Pink Party". It was an over-the-top elegant black carpet reception at its new location in the Palm Beach plaza Mall to celebrate its re-opening and to raise awareness and funds for the Koningin Wilhelmina Fonds, a breast cancer foundation established in Aruba 60 years ago by the Queen Mother of the Netherlands. The outside area of the boutique was converted into a sophisticated European lounge with white sofas, poufs, white curtains, palm trees, orchids, ice sculptures and pink led lights bathing and creating a chic and relaxed atmosphere with great music by Swing Masterz, for hundreds of VIP guests to mingle and sip a variety of pink martinis created by Aruba Trading, while enjoying superb and creative hors d'oeuvres. The luxury brands and the magazine publication also included a special X-clusivo awards celebration and gave them to the VIP as best artist, politician, best-dressed and media of Aruba. The culmination of the evening was the importance of the awareness towards the breast cancer foundation, its Director Lilian Prince and committee and the wonder-

ful work it has performed over the years. Her Excellence Minister of Economic Affairs Michelle Hooyberg-Winklaar also addressed the evening and spoke of the ongoing charitable work of the luxury brands and the publication, and invited all the guests to swipe credit cards since a portion of the proceeds of the evening sales was going to be donated to the breast cancer foundation. The Minister of Economic Affairs then cut the official ribbon of the opening of the boutique and guests strolled in to view and buy the new collections to contribute for the noble cause. It was a magnificent and magical evening for Aruba to remember!



Brees sets passing mark, Saints top Falcons 45-16

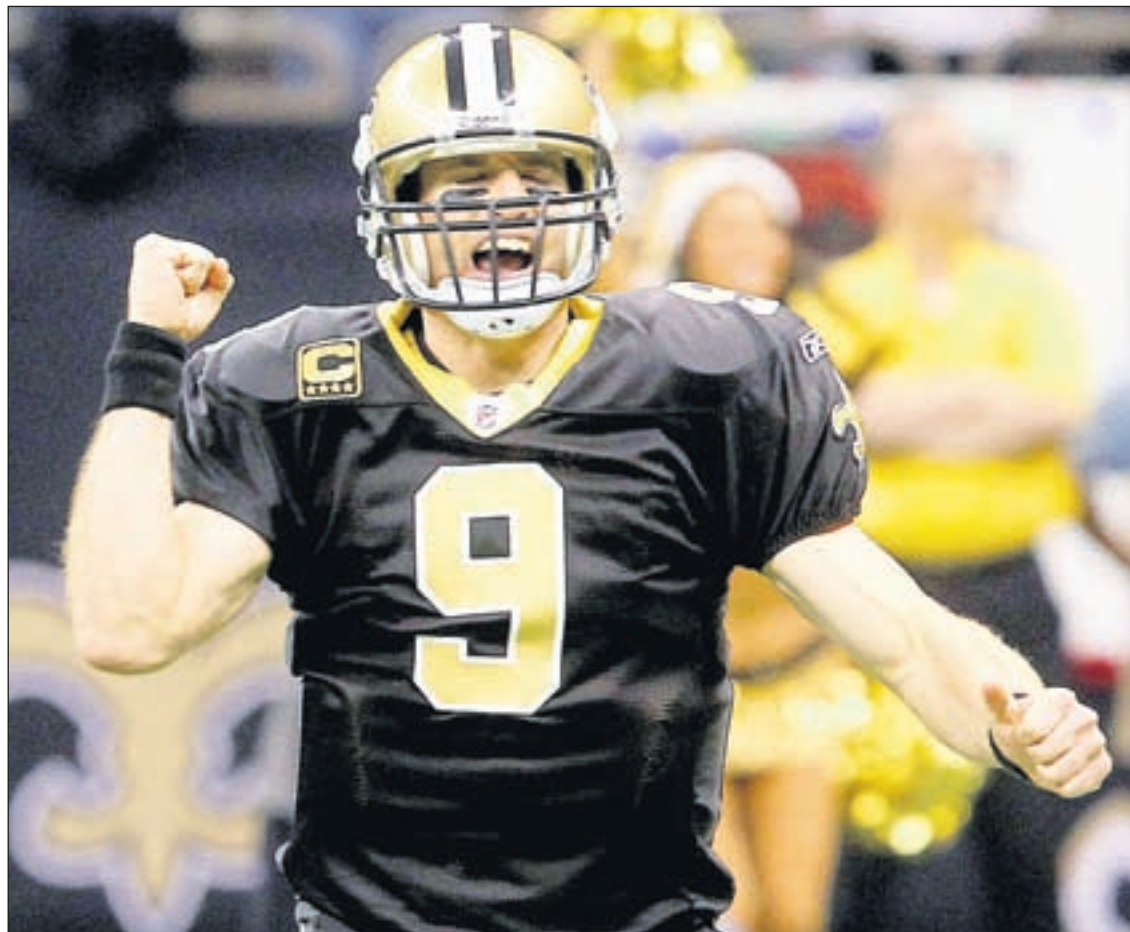
NEW ORLEANS (AP) — New Orleans quarterback Drew Brees set the NFL record for yards passing in a season, breaking a mark that Dan Marino had held for 27 years, as the Saints clinched the NFC South title with a 45-16 victory over the Atlanta Falcons on Monday.

Brees threw for 307 yards and four touchdowns, the last a 9-yard strike to Darren Sproles that set the record with 2:51 to go.

It was Brees' final pass of the game and it gave him 5,087 yards passing — with one game still to play. Marino finished with 5,084 yards for the Miami Dolphins in 1984.

As Sproles spiked the ball, Brees put his arm over his head and started walking toward midfield while the Superdome crowd went wild and his teammates chased him down.

Brees' four touchdowns gave him 276 for his ca-



New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees celebrates a touchdown by running back Pierre Thomas in the first quarter of an NFL football game against the Atlanta Falcons in New Orleans, Monday, Dec. 26, 2011.

Associated Press

reer, moving him ahead of Joe Montana (273) and Vinny Testaverde (275) for ninth all-time.

He is the first quarterback in NFL history to pass for more than 5,000 yards twice — he had 5,069 in 2008.

The Saints also had 463 total yards, giving them more than 6,857 offensive yards for the season, breaking the 2008 club record. New Orleans continues to close in on the NFL-record of 7,075 offensive yards in a season set by the 2000 St. Louis Rams.

New Orleans entered the game needing only one victory to clinch the NFC South title, while Atlanta could have remained in the hunt to defend its 2010 division crown with a win.

After Atlanta received the opening kickoff, quarterback Matt Ryan completed five of his first six throws for 52 yards.

Continued on Page 21



Legendary surf forecaster Sean Collins of Seal Beach, Ca., is seen in a Jan. 12, 2005 photo. Collins, founder of surfline.com., died Monday, Dec. 26, 2011 in Newport Beach, Ca., when he collapsed and died of a heart attack. He was 59.

Associated Press

NEWPORT BEACH, California (AP) — There was a time when surfers spent much of their time behind-

the-wheel on "surfin' safari" journeys in an aimless search for waves. Sean Collins changed all that.

Surfline.com founder Sean Collins dies at 59

His telephone Surfline reports based on observations from a stable of seasoned wave riders up and down the California coast evolved with technology into a worldwide report on surf spots worldwide via his www.surfline.com website. More than 500,000 people log onto the website each month. Collins, 59, collapsed while playing tennis on Monday afternoon in Newport Beach, his youngest son A.J. Collins said. He was declared dead a short time later at Hoag Hospital Newport Beach.

The death of Surfline's founder, president and forecaster was first reported by the Orange County

Register. When he was inducted into the Huntington Beach Surfers' Hall of Fame in 2008, Collins wrote the words "Follow Your Passions" in concrete at the shrine on the corner of Pacific Coast Highway and Main Street. Collins began surfing in Seal Beach when he was 8 years old. He began weather tracking while spending hours at sea with his father on a 50-foot (16-meter) sailboat. He had no formal training, just a few meteorology courses at Long Beach Community College and a passion.

Surfline's telephone service began in the 1980s. From the everyday surfer looking for waves before work to

surf contest organizers, Surfline became crucial for modern wave riders. He personally sent out alerts to lifeguards and news agencies when big waves were on the way.

He set up the first live "surfcam" in 1996.

Collins, who lived in Seal Beach, was named one of the 25 Most Influential Surfers of the Century by Surfer Magazine in 1999 and the eighth Most Powerful Surfer in the Surf Industry by Surfer Magazine in 2002.

He sold Surfline in 2000, but stayed on as president and chief forecaster.

Besides his son A.J., Collins is survived by his wife Daren and eldest son Tyler. □

NBA Roundup

Nets fight back to beat Wizards 90-84

WASHINGTON (AP) — New Jersey's Kris Humphries finished with 21 points and 16 rebounds to help the Nets overcome a big deficit and beat the Washington Wizards 90-84 on Monday in the NBA season opener for both teams.

Deron Williams had 23 points, eight rebounds and eight assists for New Jersey, which trailed by as much as 21 points in the second quarter, but began to turn things around with a 16-2 run.

Backup shooting guard Nick Young led Washington with 16 points in just 18 minutes. He missed a large part of the second half with a foot injury but returned.

KINGS 100, LAKERS 91

In Sacramento, Marcus Thornton scored 12 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter as Sacramento opened its season in grand fashion, beating the Los Angeles at home for the first time in more than three years.

Tyreke Evans added 20 points for the Kings, who had lost nine of 10 to the Lakers and five straight at home.

Kobe Bryant scored 29 points and Metta World Peace — formerly known as Ron Artest — added 19 for the Lakers, who opened the season with consecutive losses for the first time since 2002-03, putting a damper on the start of new coach Mike Brown's tenure.

WARRIORS 99, BULLS 91

In Oakland, Stephen Curry had 21 points and 10 assists as Golden State beat Chicago, giving new coach Mark Jackson his first victory.

Monta Ellis scored 26 points for the Warriors, who lost their opening game on Christmas Day.

Luol Deng, whose block sealed Chicago's season-opening win over the Lakers, had 22 points and 10 rebounds for the Bulls, who trailed by as much as 19 before making a late surge

to get within five points with 36.3 seconds remaining.

BOBCATS 96, BUCKS 95

In Charlotte, North Carolina, Charlotte erased a 14-point deficit to beat Minnesota by the narrowest margin.

D.J. Augustin scored 19 points while rookie Kemba Walker added 13, including two free throws with 9.9 seconds remaining.

Brandon Jennings had 22 points for the Bucks.

MAGIC 104, ROCKETS 95

In Orlando, Hedo Turkoglu scored 23 points to lead five Magic players in double figures as Orlando beat Houston.

Orlando got 13 points from Turkoglu and eight points from J.J. Redick in the fourth quarter to help the Magic stave off a handful of second-half charges by the Rockets.

Kyle Lowry had 20 points and 12 assists for Houston, which closed within four in the fourth quarter, but the Magic were able to hit some timely 3-pointers late to help secure the victory.

PACERS 91, PISTONS 79

In Indianapolis, Roy Hibbert had 16 points and 14 rebounds to help Indiana defeat Detroit.

The Pacers shot just 37 percent from the field, but got away with it because they outrebounded the Pistons 53-40. Indiana had 18 offensive rebounds and 14 second-chance points.

Jonas Jerebko and Rodney Stuckey each scored 17 points for the Pistons, who never led.

RAPTORS 104, CAVALIERS 96

In Cleveland, rookie Kyrie Irving scored just six points and hardly played like the No. 1 draft pick as Toronto spoiled the Cleveland guard's NBA debut.

Irving, who played just 11 college games before turning pro, finished just 2 of 11 from the field — he made a meaningless 3-pointer in the final minutes.

The Cavs are counting on the 19-year-old to turn

around a team that won just 19 games last season.

In other NBA games it was Toronto 104, Cleveland 96; Charlotte 96, Milwaukee 95; Indiana 91, Detroit 79; Orlando 104, Houston 95; New Jersey 90, Washington 84; Oklahoma City 104, Minnesota 100; Denver 115, Dallas 93; San Antonio 95, Memphis 82; New Orleans 85, Phoenix 84; Sacramento 100, L.A. Lakers 91; Portland 107, Philadelphia 103; and Golden State 99, Chicago 91. □



New Jersey Nets forward Kris Humphries (43) goes to the basket against Washington Wizards forward Rashard Lewis (9) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Monday, Dec. 26, 2011, in Washington. The Nets won 90-84.

Associated Press

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NHL Roundup

Cracknell back to help Blues win again

ST. LOUIS (AP) — St. Louis' Adam Cracknell justified his recall from the minors earlier in the day by scoring the go-ahead goal as the Blues beat the Dallas Stars 5-3 in the NHL on Monday.

St. Louis, which won its sixth successive home game, scored two rare power-play goals and improved to 7-1-1 in its past nine. The Blues have thrived under coach Ken Hitchcock, who took over Nov. 6 after Davis Payne was fired. Chris Stewart scored twice for St. Louis, including an empty-net goal with 50 seconds left. Evgeny Grachev, Chris Stewart and Jason Arnott also scored for the



St. Louis Blues' Adam Cracknell (79) advances the puck past Dallas Stars' Loui Eriksson (21) in the second period of an NHL hockey game, Monday, Dec. 26, 2011 in St. Louis.

Associated Press

Blues, who had lost their previous five against Dallas. Mike Ribeiro, Eric Nystrom and Michael Ryder scored for the Stars.

RED WINGS 4, PREDATORS 1

In Nashville, Valtteri Filppula scored a pair of goals to lead Detroit over Nashville. Pavel Datsyuk and Danny Cleary also scored for the Red Wings, who netted twice in a span of 13 seconds during the second period. Jonathon Blum scored for sole goal for the Predators, who slipped five points behind Detroit in the Central Division.

AVALANCHE 4, WILD 2

In St. Paul, Minnesota, Jan Hejda scored the go-ahead goal in the third period as Colorado snapped a nine-game road losing skid by beating Minnesota. The Avalanche won on the road for the first time since October and extended Minnesota's winless streak to seven games.

Ryan O'Reilly, Gabriel Landeskog and T.J. Galiardi also scored for Colorado. Pierre-Marc Bouchard and Cal Clutterbuck scored for the Wild.

CANUCKS 5, OILERS 3

In Vancouver, Andrew Ebbett scored twice to lead Vancouver over Edmonton.

Daniel Sedin, Alex Burrows, and Ryan Kesler also scored for Vancouver, which moved ahead of

Minnesota for the Northwest Division lead.

Jordan Eberle, Ryan Smyth and Corey Potter scored for the Oilers.

Vancouver outshot the Oilers 26-21 overall and dominated a weary-looking Edmonton team in the first period, limiting the Oilers to only two shots in the first 14:30 of the game.

KINGS 4, COYOTES 3

In Los Angeles, Willie Mitchell scored the tiebreaking goal early in the third period as Los Angeles broke an offensive slump to edge Phoenix. Rob Scuderi, Brad Richardson and captain Dustin Brown also scored for the Kings, who scored more than twice for the first time in 15 games.

Raffi Torres scored twice and Daymond Langkow added a third-period goal for the Coyotes.

RANGERS 3, ISLANDERS 0

In New York, Carl Hagelin scored twice for his second multigoal game in the NHL as the Rangers notched their fifth straight win by beating the Islanders in the all-New York clash.

Hagelin, in just his 16th career game, scored in the second and third periods for the surging Rangers (22-8-4). The Atlantic Division leaders leapfrogged defending Stanley Cup champion Boston into first place in the Eastern Conference. Rangers goalie Henrik Lundqvist stopped all 28 shots he faced, recording his third shutout of the season and 38th in his career.

Marian Gaborik sealed the win with his league-leading 22nd goal — an empty-netter with 2:28 left. Gaborik scored for the fifth straight game, netting seven in the span, and matched his goal total for all of last season.

In other NHL games it was Colorado 4, Minnesota 2; Buffalo 4, Washington 2; N.Y. Rangers 3, N.Y. Islanders 0; Carolina 4, New Jersey 2; St. Louis 5, Dallas 3; Detroit 4, Nashville 1; Chicago 4, Columbus 1; Vancouver 5, Edmonton 3; Los Angeles 4, Phoenix 3; and Anaheim 3, San Jose 2. □

Wild Oats' lead narrows in Sydney-Hobart race

SYDNEY (AP) — Favored supermaxi Wild Oats XI, line honors winner in five of the last six years, held a narrowing lead over its nearest rival as the fleet in the Sydney to Hobart yacht race streamed across Bass Strait in lightening winds.

Wild Oats XI led last year's second-place finisher Investec Loyal by up to 15 nautical miles on Tuesday but as the 100-footer sailed into an area of low pressure the wind fell away and its lead rapidly reduced.

On positions plotted at 8 p.m. AEDT (0800 GMT), Wild Oats XI led by only 3.6 nautical miles from Investec Loyal with around 260 miles to the finish line in the 628 nautical mile race.

Wild Oats XI had sailed into an area of light winds and though Investec Loyal was sailing faster, it was heading into the same light weather system as the yachts neared the island state of Tasmania.

The battle for line honors became a virtual two-boat race when the supermaxi Wild Thing withdrew from the race Tuesday with sail damage when running third.

The withdrawal of Wild Thing continued its unlucky run in the race. The 2003 line honors winner capsized in 2004, withdrew soon after the start in 2009 and hit a media boat at the start last year. Wild Oats XI and Investec Loyal were left with a 30 mile lead over third-placed Lahana which was a further 31 miles ahead of fourth-placed Hugo Boss.

The contest for overall handicap honors was constantly evolving and at various times on Tuesday Wild Oats, Lahana, Wild Rose and Mondo held the outright lead.

Wild Thing's retirement was one of several withdrawals on Tuesday which reduced the fleet from 88 to 81 boats. Yachts and crews had been battered overnight by a southerly front that brought winds of up to 30 knots and rough seas. □



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Saturday, December 24th, 2011 closed.

Sunday, December 25th, 2011 closed.

Monday, December 26th, 2011 closed.

NEW YEAR WEEKEND:

Friday, December 30th, 2011 at 12:00 noon.

Saturday, December 31st, 2011 closed.

Sunday, January 1st, 2012 closed.

Monday, January 2nd, 2012 closed.



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Saints-Falcons

Continued from Page 17

The Saints' defense stiffened, however, forcing Atlanta to settle for Matt Bryant's 34-yard field goal and an early 3-0 lead.

The Saints responded immediately, with Brees hitting Lance Moore for a 38-yard gain on New Orleans' first play from scrimmage. The Saints then went to the running game, with Chris Ivory rushing one time for 11 yards and Pierre Thomas three times for 24 yards, including a 4-yard touch-down run to make it 7-3 to the hosts.

After scoring, Thomas pulled a bow from his pants, stuck it on the football and offered it as a gift to a woman in the stands. The referees weren't cutting Thomas any slack on his Christmas-themed celebration, flagging him for a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

The penalty, enforced on the ensuing kickoff, was not terribly costly, as the return only reached the Atlanta 28-yard line.

More costly was the Saints' inability to slow down Ryan, who quickly found Julio Jones for a 25-yard gain in a drive that set up another 21-yard pass to Jones to put the visitors back in front 10-7 late in the first quarter. New Orleans responded with a 10-play, 81-yard scoring drive in the second quarter on which Brees completed four of six passes for 48 yards, the last three to Marques Colston, who had six catches for 69 yards in the first half.

That 8-yard pass to Colston brought up Brees' first TD

pass of the game, followed by a 9-yard pass to Jimmy Graham to make it 21-10. It was Graham's 10th TD reception of the season, setting a franchise record for a tight end.

In the third quarter, Brees hit Robert Meachem for a score from 24 yards, which made it 28-10.

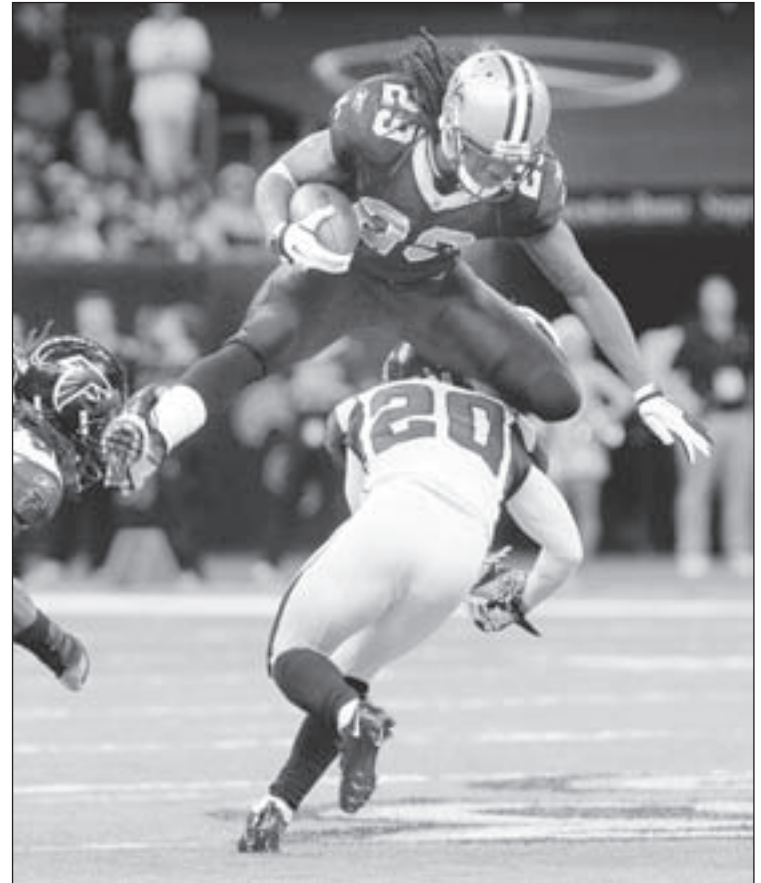
After an exchange of field goals, the game became a romp when Julio Jones was stripped of the ball by Scott Shanle and Malcolm Jenkins returned it 30 yards for a score to make it 38-16

New Orleans Saints running back Chris Ivory (29) leaps over Atlanta Falcons cornerback Brent Grimes (20) in the third quarter of an NFL football game in New Orleans, Monday, Dec. 26, 2011. Associated Press

in the fourth quarter.

The Superdome crowd was in full celebration by then, but the play also meant fans would have to wait until later in the fourth quarter before Brees finally got his chance to break the passing record.

He finally gave the fans what they wanted after Atlanta failed on a fourth-down try at its own 33. That gave Brees, who needed only 30 yards for the record at that point, just enough space to work with. □



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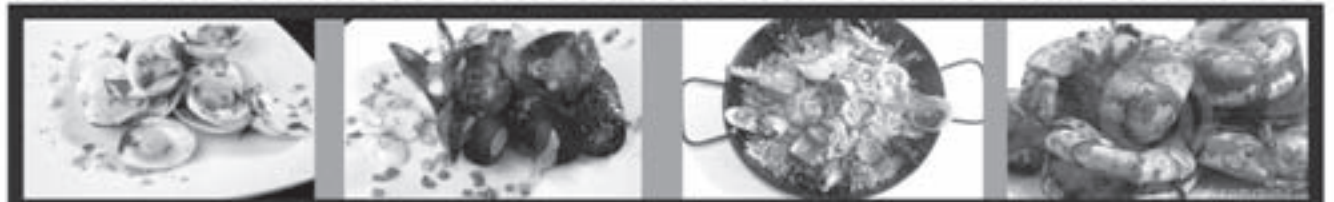
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Dr. Carlos & Phyllis Viana

Our tropical lime tree grew from a seed saved by our long time cook. Together, when our oldest son was a young boy, Julio and Tata planted and nurtured the seed into a strong healthy tree. For years we were blessed with an over abundance of juicy organic, limes, an incredible source of Vitamin C. Our lime juice

made countless pitchers of limeade, flavored our foods and was offered freely to patients who walked through our healing garden. Four years ago, I realized that some of the leaves were no longer the deep green color. Many previously healthy leaves had turned yellow and fallen off the tree, leaving dry branches behind. Concerned that we could lose our precious lime tree, I sought the expertise of plant specialist. Even willing to suspend our ban on using any poison around our home and clinic, I sought any treatment for our ailing

lime tree.

The diagnosis was bleak. The problem was diagnosed as being caused by the Citrus tristeza virus that causes the death of millions of Citrus trees all over the world. Farmers in South American gave it the name "tristeza", meaning sadness in Portuguese and Spanish. Sadness in fact as I heard that there was nothing we could do but watch branch, by branch of our lime tree turn brown and lifeless. For the last four years, instead of cutting down the whole lime tree, I periodically cut away and cleaned dead branches

always optimistic that our tree would heal and produce again.

Several weeks ago, inspecting the one remaining branch, I was surprised to see the branch filled with limes. Nature has taken four years for the remaining branch and root system to develop and immunity to the virus. The new seeds will carry this immunity to new seedlings that will be resistant to the citrus virus.

Our lime tree is a fruit bearing example of nature's ability to recover from a setback. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to contribute through this

column, our part in bringing hope and natural solutions for the health of our readers, our community and beyond. Our holistic natural health center depends upon serving all of you the best we can.

Thank you to all of our readers, listeners and patients for your confidence in our ability to serve you. We wish you all a safe, healthy Holiday Season and may the Healing Spirit bless you with unwavering faith that a solution for healing will be shown when you need it. A healthy, joyful and prosperous New Year to all. □

The high price of failing artificial hips

BARRY MEIER

© 2011 New York Times

The most widespread medical implant failure in decades – involving thousands of all-metal artificial hips that need to be replaced prematurely – has entered a new phase, the money one.

Medical and legal experts estimate the hip failures may cost taxpayers, insurers, employers and others billions of dollars in coming years, contributing to the soaring cost of health care. The financial fallout is expected to be unusually large and complex because the episode involves a class of products, not a single device or just one

company.

The case of Thomas Dougherty represents one particularly costly example. He spent five months this year without a left hip, largely stuck on a recliner watching his medical bills soar.

In August, Dougherty underwent an operation to replace a failed artificial hip, but his pelvis fractured soon afterward. The replacement hip was abandoned and then a serious infection set in. Some of the bills: \$400,776 in charges related to hospitalizations, \$28,081 in doctors' bills, \$5,823 for laboratory tests and \$2,995 in home nursing visits. "I'm sitting here on a La-Z-Boy meant for some-



Thomas Dougherty, who spent five months this year without a left hip after undergoing an operation to replace a failed artificial hip, at his home in Groveland, Ill. The most widespread medical implant failure in decades – involving thousands of all-metal artificial hips that need to be replaced prematurely – has experts estimating a cost to taxpayers, insurers, employers and others in the billions of dollars in coming years.

(Kristen Schmid/The New York Times)

one who is 80 and I'm 55," said Dougherty, who lives in Groveland, Ill., outside Peoria, and works at Caterpillar, the heavy equipment manufacturer.

His bills are "five times as much" as he paid for his home. The so-called metal-on-metal hips like Dougherty's, ones in which the ball and joint of a device are both made of metal, are failing at high rates within a few years of implant instead of lasting 15 years or more, as artificial joints normally do. The wear of metal parts against each other is generating debris that is damaging tissue and, in some cases, crippling patients. □

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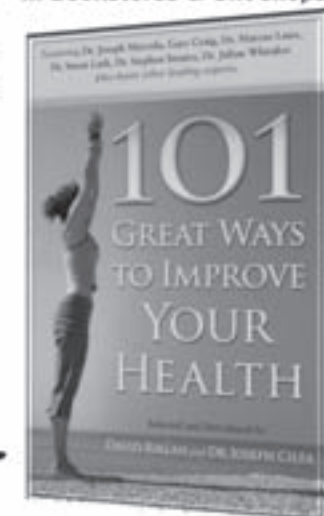


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Online shopping jumps 16.4 pct on Christmas Day

NEW YORK (AP) — A growing number of shoppers in the U.S. apparently need only the briefest of breaks before diving back in, especially if they can log in to shop.

IBM found that online shopping jumped 16.4 percent on Christmas Day over last year, and the dollar amount of those purchases that were made using mobile devices leaped 172.9 percent.

IBM tracks shopping at more than 500 websites other than Amazon.com, which is

the largest. It found a huge increase in the number of shoppers making their purchases with iPhones, iPads and Android-powered mobile devices.

In fact, nearly 7 percent of all online purchases were made using iPads, just 18 months after the tablet computers were released by Apple Inc., said John Squire, chief strategy officer for IBM's Smarter Commerce unit.

The online uptick was continuing on Monday. As of 3 p.m. Eastern time, shop-

ping was up 10 percent over Dec. 26, 2010. And the expectation was that the pace of buying would increase as the day wore on and consumers clicked on sales at various retailers.

Squire said consumers were chasing sales on both Sunday and Monday. The data did not show what portion of purchases was made using gift cards. □



Megan Roney shops online at Europa Coffeehouse in Denver Monday, Nov. 28, 2011 on what has become know as Cyber Monday.

Associated Press



In this July 6, 2011 file photo, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg smiles during an announcement at Facebook headquarters in Palo Alto, Calif.

Associated Press

Facebook unwelcome in Vietnam, but founder OK

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Vietnam may block its citizens from using Facebook, but that didn't stop website founder Mark Zuckerberg from vacationing in the communist country.

Zuckerberg spent Christmas Eve in the popular tourist destination Ha Long Bay, local official Trinh Dang Thanh says. State-run media say Zuckerberg arrived in Vietnam on Dec. 22.

Zuckerberg spent Christmas Day at an ecolodge in the northern mountain town of Sapa and rode a buffalo, said Le Phuc Thien, deputy manager at Topas Ecolodge.

Zuckerberg, Facebook's 27-year-old CEO, founded the social networking site in 2004.

Vietnam's aggressive Internet censors block access to Facebook and other websites, but young Vietnamese easily bypass the restrictions. □

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Stocks barely changed in light holiday trading

PALLAVI GOGOI
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks ended barely changed in light trading Tuesday amid mixed economic news. Consumer confidence surged to an eight-month high, but home prices dropped in major cities. Sears plummeted after reporting that it would close more than 100 stores around the U.S. The Dow Jones industrial average closed down just 2 points after staying in a narrow range all day. The S&P 500 index and Nasdaq eked out small gains. In the latest sign of a bumpy recovery in the housing market, home prices fell in 19 of the 20 cities tracked by the Standard & Poor's/Case-Shiller index. Atlanta, Detroit

and Minneapolis posted the biggest declines. Prices in Atlanta and Las Vegas fell to their lowest points since the housing crisis began. That report dampened investors' enthusiasm about a jump in consumer confidence to the highest level since April. The New York-based Conference Board reported that its Consumer Confidence Index rose almost 10 points to 64.5 in December. Economists watch the numbers closely because consumer spending accounts for about 70 percent of U.S. economic activity. Henry Herrmann, chief executive officer at the investment management firm Waddell & Reed, said the increase reflected the fact

that more jobs have been created in recent weeks, which will likely lead to "a more sustained" economic recovery. "If job creation will come with wage improvement in the coming weeks, it will boost confidence further," Herrmann said. The Dow Jones lost 2.65 points, or 0.02 percent, to close at 12,291.35. The S&P 500 was up 0.10 points, or 0.01 percent, to 1,265.43. The Nasdaq composite rose 6.56, or 0.3 percent, to 2,625.20. The most the Dow rose during the day was 34 points, and the most it fell was 24. It was the narrowest trading range in 5 months. Stocks are expected to trade within a narrow range



Currency traders watch monitors at the foreign exchange dealing room of the Korea Exchange Bank headquarters in Seoul, South Korea. Stocks ended barely changed in light trading Tuesday amid mixed economic news. Consumer confidence surged to an eight-month high, but home prices dropped in major cities.

(AP Photo/Lee Jin-man)

all this week as trading remains light between the Christmas holiday and New Year's. The volume of shares trad-

ed on the New York Stock Exchange Tuesday was 2 billion, less than half the average daily volume this month. □



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Company to close at least 100 Sears, Kmart stores



Pedestrians pass a Kmart location Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2011, in New York. Sears Holdings Corporation, the parent company of Sears and Kmart department stores, announced Tuesday morning that it will close 100 to 120 stores after a sluggish holiday season.

(AP Photo/Frank Franklin II)

**CHRISTINA REXRODE
MICHELLE CHAPMAN
AP Business Writers**

NEW YORK (AP) — After a disastrous holiday shopping season, the parent company of Sears and Kmart will close at least 100 stores to raise cash — a move that sparked speculation about whether the 125-year-old U.S. retailer can avoid a death spiral fed by declining sales and deteriorating stores. Sears Holdings Corp., a pillar of American retailing that famously began with a mail-order catalog in the 1880s, declared Tuesday that it would no longer prop up “marginally performing” locations. The company pledged to refocus its efforts on stores that

make money. Sears’ stock quickly plunged, dropping 27 percent.

The closings are the latest and most visible move by Eddie Lampert, the hands-on chairman who has struggled to reverse the company’s fortunes.

As rivals Wal-Mart and Target Corp. spruced up stores in recent years, Sears Holdings struggled with falling sales and perceptions of dowdy merchandise.

Some analysts wondered if it was already too late, questioning whether the retailer can afford to upgrade stores as it burns through its cash reserves.

The sales weakness “begins and some would argue ends with Sears’ reluctance

to invest in stores and service,” Credit Suisse analyst Gary Balter wrote in a note to clients.

“There’s no reason to go to Sears,” added New York-based independent retail analyst Brian Sozzi. “It offers a depressing shopping experience and uncompetitive prices.”

Sears and Kmart were both retail pioneers. Sears’ catalog and department stores were fixtures of American life stretching back to the 19th century before being hurt in recent years by competition from steep discounters and by missteps that included forays into financial services and the decision to sell off a lucrative credit card business. □



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Soup of the Night: Pumpkin Soup
Chef’s Carving: Slow Roasted Beef Tenderloin • Béarnaise Sauce and Chimichuri
Selected Entrees: Tilapia Fillet, White Wine Sauce • Roasted Turkey with Gravy • Braised Pork Bourguignon
Side Dishes: Pilaf Rice • Fettuccini with Escargot • Garlic Mashed Potatoes • Ratatouille



Friday Seafood Night

Soup of the Night: Seafood Chowder
Chef’s Carving: Salmon Wellington, in Puff Pastry with White Fish Mousse & Spinach, Lemon Caper Sauce
Selected Entrees: Grouper Fillet Creole • Seafood Newburg • Garlic Shrimp • Chicken Curry
Side Dishes: Jasmine Rice • Penne Pasta in Clam Sauce • Vegetable Medley • Fried Plantain



Saturday Prime Rib Night

Soup of the Night: Onion Soup
Chef Carved: Slow Roasted, USA Prime Rib, au Jus
Selected Entrees: Roasted Lamb Garlic & Herb • Stirfried Chicken • Cajun Fish Fillet, Cilantro Sauce
Side Dishes: Baked Potatoes with Condiment • Macaroni & Cheese • Sautéed Green Beans & Mushrooms • Stuffed Tomatoes

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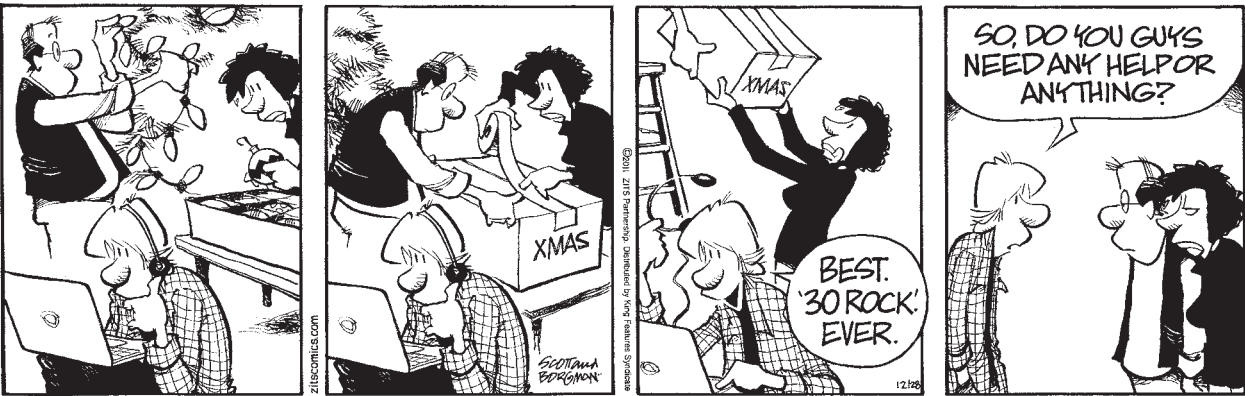
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

		4	6					
	8		3					
6				7				9
5	2	8			1	6	3	
		3						2
		1						8
		9	4	1	3	2	6	5
		5		8		4		7
		6		5		8		3

Difficulty Level ★★★

12/28

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

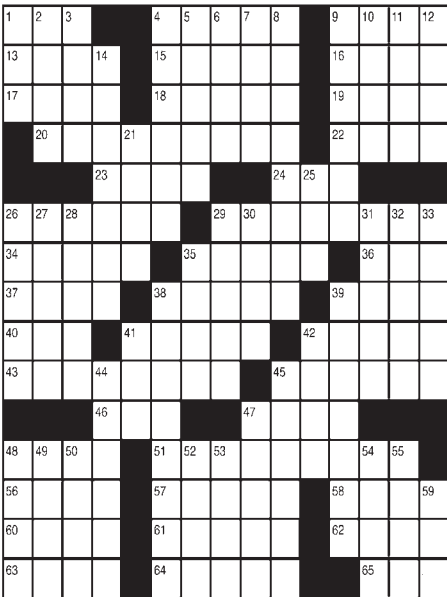
3	2	5	8	9	1	4	6	7
4	7	8	5	6	3	2	1	9
9	6	1	7	4	2	8	3	5
6	4	9	1	5	7	3	2	8
8	5	2	4	3	6	9	7	1
1	3	7	9	2	8	6	5	4
7	8	3	2	1	4	5	9	6
2	9	4	6	7	5	1	8	3
5	1	6	3	8	9	7	4	2

ACROSS

- 1 African antelope
- 4 Pains
- 9 ZIP __; part of an address
- 13 Uncle's wife
- 15 "Trick or __!"; 10/31 greeting
- 16 __-the-top; outrageous
- 17 Recipe verb
- 18 Josh with
- 19 Listen
- 20 Figurine
- 22 Loose __; unfinished business
- 23 Hit on the head
- 24 Fraternity letter
- 26 Gout site
- 29 Fleece cutters
- 34 Dole out
- 35 Charley horse
- 36 Boehner or Pelosi; abbr.
- 37 South African Dutchman
- 38 Contaminate
- 39 Bean curd
- 40 Zsa Zsa's sister
- 41 "Nothing __!"; firm refusal
- 42 Surgical beam
- 43 Logical
- 45 Gobi or Sahara
- 46 Zodiac lion
- 47 Dinghy or dory
- 48 Jewish wedding dance
- 51 Running
- 56 Prayer closing
- 57 Sparkle
- 58 Christmas song
- 60 __ and rave; carry on
- 61 Staring
- 62 Puncture
- 63 Experts
- 64 Unclothed
- 65 Tennis court divider

DOWN

- 1 Car fuel
- 2 Bolts' buddies
- 3 Intensive care __; ICU



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/28/11

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

B	L	O	B	S	S	P	I	N	L	A	N	A
L	E	V	E	E	H	A	L	E	A	W	E	D
A	V	E	R	T	E	L	L	S	B	A	R	D
B	I	R	E	T	T	A	S	T	H	R	I	V
			F	E	A	R		B	L	O	A	T
M	O	N	T	E	L		F	I	E	L	D	
A	P	E		S	E	A	L	S		D	O	C
R	E	E	D		S	C	O	O	T		R	O
E	D	D	I	E		M	A	N	O	N	O	D
			S	S	W	E	E	T		K	I	C
F	A	S	T	E	N	S		B	E	T	H	
A	B	H	O	R	S		P	E	N	P	O	I
B	O	A	R		I	D	E	A		I	S	S
L	I	N	T		G	E	R	M		C	E	L
E	L	K	S		N	E	T	S		K	N	E

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12/28/11

- 39 Sampling
- 41 __-hard; fanatically devoted
- 42 __ year; 2012, for one
- 44 Inclines
- 45 Facing a terrible fate
- 47 Fire
- 48 Nag
- 49 Gen. Bradley
- 50 City in Nevada
- 52 Pond growth
- 53 Ooze out
- 54 Middy
- 55 Actor Richard
- 59 Allow

Argentines demand free breast implants

ALMUDENA CALATRAVA BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — A group of 50 Argentine women threatened to sue their plastic surgeons on Tuesday if they don't get free replacements of faulty French breast implants. The group is led by attorney Virginia Luna, who herself has the "PIP" silicone gel packs implanted in her breasts. She said five of her clients have obtained out-of-court agreements to provide free replacements, and if the rest don't get them as well, her group will sue. The implants made by the now-defunct French company Poly Implant Prothese were banned last year in countries around the world after more than 1,000 women suffered ruptures. In all, 30,000 French women got the implants, and could experience harmful leaks of cheap industrial-grade silicone — not the medical-grade gel that higher-quality implants use. France's health system has recommended that any women with the implants get them replaced, and has agreed to pay for surgeries that could total millions of dollars. Not so in Brazil and Argentina, where thousands more of the implants were sold. □

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San Nicolas	584-5000



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Ancient seal found in Jerusalem linked to ritual

MATTI FRIEDMAN
Associated Press
JERUSALEM (AP) — A rare clay seal found under Jerusalem's Old City appears to be linked to religious rituals practiced at the Jewish Temple 2,000 years ago, Israeli archaeologists said Sunday.

The coin-sized seal found near the Jewish holy site at the Western Wall bears two Aramaic words meaning "pure for God."

Archaeologist Ronny Reich of Haifa University said it dates from between the 1st century B.C. to 70 A.D. — the year Roman forces put down a Jewish revolt and destroyed the second



A rare clay seal is displayed during a news conference at the archaeological site known as the City of David in east Jerusalem, Sunday, Dec. 25, 2011.

Associated Press

of the two biblical temples in Jerusalem.

The find marks the first discovery of a written seal from that period of Jerusalem's history, and appeared to be a unique physical artifact from ritual practice in the Temple, said Reich, co-director of the excavation.

Very few artifacts linked to the Temples have been discovered so far. The site of the Temple itself — the enclosure known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary — remains off-limits to archaeologists because of its religious and political sensitivity.

Archaeologists say the seal

was likely used by Temple officials approving an object for ritual use — oil, perhaps, or an animal intended for sacrifice. Materials used by Temple priests had to meet stringent purity guidelines stipulated in detail in the Jewish legal text known as the Mishna, which also mention the use of seals as tokens by pilgrims.

The find, Reich said, is "the first time an indication was brought by archaeology about activities in the Temple Mount — the religious activities of buying and offering and giving to the Temple itself."

The site where the seal was found is on the route of a main street that ran through ancient Jerusalem just outside the Temple compound.

Aren Maeir of Bar-Ilan University, a biblical archaeologist not connected to the dig, said the seal was special because it "was found right next to the Temple and is similar to what we see described in the Mishna." "It's nice when we can connect an activity recorded in ancient sources with archaeological finds," he said.

The seal was found in an excavation run by archaeologists from the government's Israel Antiquities Authority. The dig is under the auspices of a broader dig nearby known as the City of David, where archaeologists are investigating the oldest part of Jerusalem. □

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Bon Iver to feature in workout DVD



Justin Vernon of the Grammy-nominated band Bon Iver performs the first of two sold-out shows at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire's Zorn Arena in Eau Claire Monday night Dec. 12, 2011, in Eau Claire, Wis.

Associated Press

EAU CLAIRE, Wisconsin (AP) — The Grammy-nominated band from western Wisconsin, Bon Iver, will appear in a fitness DVD.

Personal trainer Jeff Rogers met singer, songwriter and frontman Justin Vernon several years ago while playing basketball at an Eau Claire YMCA.

Noticing "something wasn't right," the personal trainer approached the singer and discovered he was suffering from sciatica. Rogers offered to show Vernon workouts to strengthen his lower back and eventually the entire band joined in, taking Rogers' workouts on tour.

Rogers, who trains clients in Chippewa Valley, has put out a DVD titled "On the Road," which features the band and one of their songs. The Leader-Telegram newspaper reports the DVD is due out early next year. On Rogers' website, Vernon says the Rogers helped him understand his body. □



This Monday, July 18, 2011 file photo shows swimsuit model Chrissy Teigen, and singer John Legend pose for photos after the Dineila Brazil swim show during the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in Miami Beach, Fla.

Associated Press

John Legend engaged to model Chrissy Teigen

NEW YORK (AP) — John Legend is engaged.

The singer's publicist said Tuesday that Legend proposed to his girlfriend, model Chrissy Teigen, recently in the Maldives.

No more details are being provided.

Legend has won nine Grammys and released four albums. Teigen was named "rookie of the year" in the Sports Illustrated's annual swimsuit issue last year. She also has a food blog.

Legend turns 33 Wednesday. □

Matthew McConaughey engaged to longtime girlfriend

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Mat-

thew McConaughey is engaged to marry his long-time girlfriend, Camilla Alves.

The 42-year-old actor proposed to the Brazilian model on Christmas Day. He announced the move in a tweet that included a photo of the couple kissing and read, "just asked camila to marry me, merry Christmas."

McConaughey's publicist confirmed the engagement Tuesday.

McConaughey and Alves have two children together, son Levi and daughter Vida.

His film credits include "We Are Marshall," "Tropic Thunder" and "The Lincoln Lawyer." □



In this Thursday, June 9, 2011 file photo, actor Matthew McConaughey, right, and Camilla Alves arrive at the taping of "TV Land Presents: AFI Life Achievement Award Honoring Morgan Freeman" in Culver City, Calif.

Associated Press.

Van Halen announces 2012 tour on website

NEW YORK (AP) — Van Halen will tour in 2012.

The rock band has posted a video on its website announcing that the first tickets will go on sale Jan. 10.

The black-and-white video shows guitarist Eddie Van Halen and drummer Alex Van Halen, along with original lead singer David Lee Roth and Eddie's son, Wolfgang, on bass. The ticker at the bottom of the video reads: "Van Halen on Tour 2012. First tickets on sale January 10."

No other information is posted on the website.

Van Halen, with its flamboyant frontman "Diamond Dave," was one of the most popular rock bands of the 1980s, but Roth left the band in 1985. Van Halen toured with him in 2007-2008. □



In this Friday, Nov. 23, 2007 file photo, David Lee Roth, left and Eddie Van Halen of Van Halen perform during a concert in Glendale, Ariz. Van Halen will tour in 2012. The rock band has posted a video on its website announcing that the first tickets will go on sale Jan. 10, but no other details.

Associated Press



In this Friday, Nov. 23, 2007 file photo, David Lee Roth, left and Eddie Van Halen of Van Halen perform during a concert in Glendale, Ariz. Van Halen will tour in 2012. The rock band has posted a video on its website announcing that the first tickets will go on sale Jan. 10, but no other details.

Associated Press

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Abstract painter Helen Frankenthaler dies at 83

MARK KENNEDY

AP Entertainment Writer
NEW YORK (AP) —

Helen Frankenthaler, an abstract painter known for her bold, lyrical use of color who led a post-war art movement that would later be termed Color Field painting, died Tuesday at her home in Connecticut, her nephew said. She was 83. One of Frankenthaler's most famous works is "Mountains and Sea," a 1952 painting at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., which she created by pouring thinned paint directly onto raw, unprimed canvas laid on the studio floor.

Frankenthaler's death at her home in Darien, Connecticut, followed a long illness, said her nephew, Clifford Ross, a multimedia artist and photographer known for his large landscapes. Her abstract style helped American art make the transition from Abstract Expressionism to Color Field painting and influenced such artists as Morris Louis and Kenneth Noland.

"Very few artists are able to develop a vocabulary and create an aesthetic that affects other artists deeply," said Ross. "She was the one who transmit-



In this April 22, 2002 file photo, President George W. Bush poses with painter Helen Frankenthaler, from Darien, Conn., during the National Endowment for the Arts National Medal of Arts Awards ceremony at Constitution Hall in Washington. Frankenthaler died Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2011 at her home in Darien. She was 83.
Associated Press

ted a certain kind of freedom and boldness use of the subconscious and impulse from the Abstract Expressionists on through the

Color Field painters." She was awarded the National Medal of Arts in 2002. From 1985 to 1992, she served on the National

Council on the Arts of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Frankenthaler was born on Dec. 12, 1928, on New York's Upper East Side and got her bachelor's degree from Bennington College in Vermont, where she studied with Paul Feely. She studied at Columbia University in New York and took painting classes with Vaclav Vytlacil at the Art Students League and also with Hans Hofmann.

She was only 23 when she created "Mountains and Sea," building on Jackson Pollock's abstract technique by pouring highly thinned oil paint from coffee cans directly onto the raw canvas to create floating fields of translucent color. Louis later said "Mountains and Sea" was "the bridge between Pollock and what was possible."

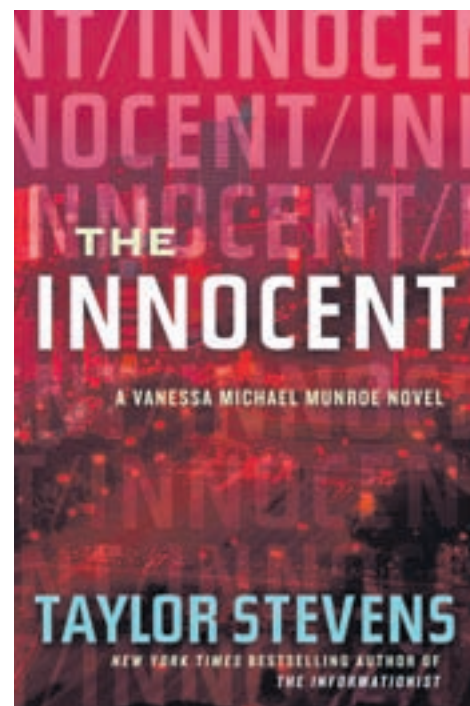
Her first solo exhibition was presented in 1951 at New York's Tibor de Nagy Gallery, and she was also included that year in the landmark exhibition "9th Street: Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture." Frankenthaler also showed internationally, exhibiting at the International Biennial of Art in Venice in 1966 and in the United States Pavilion at Expo in Montreal in 1967. Frankenthaler went on to develop a highly personal painterly manner within

the abstract expressionist movement. She worked in a wide range of media in addition to paintings on canvas and paper, including ceramics, sculpture, woodcuts, tapestry and printmaking. Frankenthaler explored a variety of linear components in her oil paintings of the 1950s, but in the 1960s she shifted her focus, embracing acrylic paints to explore open, flat fields of color, evident in the large and glowing 1973 painting "Nature Abhors a Vacuum." Ross said she was never doctrinaire and cheered art from Henri Matisse to David Smith to Willem de Kooning.

In later years, Ross said, she seemed to have fallen out of favor "because of her embrace of beauty." He predicted that in the years to come, Frankenthaler's contribution will be "as a beacon about lyricism and openness and, frankly, beauty."

"Helen's role, critically, was to provide beauty and a certain sustenance at a very bleak time," Ross said. "One of the things I'm very curious about is to see how quickly that will be absorbed and celebrated." Frankenthaler, whose 13-year marriage to the painter Robert Motherwell ended in 1971, also is survived by her second husband, Stephen M. DuBrul Jr. □

Espionage agent Munroe returns in 'The Innocent'



MICHELLE WIENER

For The Associated Press

"The Innocent: a Vanessa Michael Munroe Novel" (Crown Publishers), by Taylor Stevens: Taylor Stevens' 2010 debut, "The Informationist," was a smartly written action thriller featuring a freelance espionage agent whose survival skills and intellect were wrought out of a violent past, and whose ability to extract herself from harrowing situations in which she is heavily outnumbered is arguably matched only by James Bond (and possibly Batman). Now Vanessa "Michael" Munroe

is back in "The Innocent," having agreed to rescue a child who was abducted eight years earlier and brought into a secretive and well-protected cult known as The Chosen, based in Argentina. The people who have hired her are survivors of that cult. They understand the mindset, and while their insights are a boon for Munroe, their participation threatens a successful extraction.

Munroe is also plagued by nightmares in which she relives the violence from her last mission, and she's turned to self-medicating to combat them. While the nightmares are depicted just as terrifyingly as the waking dangers that Munroe faces — the toll they take on her psyche is vividly described

— the dangers inherent in her drug use never quite materialize in the same way.

And maybe they're not supposed to. Munroe is trusted by readers. Her team may protest and worry, but we know she'll emerge victorious. Scarred, but victorious.

Fans of thrillers who haven't yet discovered Stevens are in for a treat, though starting with "The Informationist" is recommended. Those who have eagerly awaited this sequel will be delighted to find the same intelligent writing, masterful pacing, and tense and fluid action scenes that feel ready-made for the cinema, and an intensely emotional core that lends Stevens' novel a depth not often found in the genre. □

In this book cover image released by Crown Publishers, "The Innocent," by Taylor Stevens, is shown.
Associated Press

Springtime for toxics



PAUL KRUGMAN
© 2011 New York Times

Here's what I wanted for Christmas: something that would make us both healthier and richer. And since I was just making a wish, why not ask that Americans get smarter, too?

Surprise: I got my wish, in the form of new Environmental Protection Agency standards on mercury and air toxics for power plants. These rules are long overdue: We were supposed to start regulating mercury more than 20 years ago. But the rules are finally here and will deliver huge benefits at only modest cost.

So, naturally, Republicans are furious. But before I get to the politics, let's talk about what a good thing the EPA just did.

As far as I can tell, even opponents of environmental regulation admit that mercury is nasty stuff. It's a potent neurotoxicant: The expression "mad as a hatter" emerged in the 19th century because hat-makers of the time treated fur with mercury compounds, and often suffered nerve and mental damage as a result. Hat-makers no longer use mercury (and who wears hats these days?), but a lot of mercury gets into the atmosphere from old coal-burning power plants that lack modern pollution controls. From there it gets into the water, where microbes turn it into methylmercury, which builds up in fish. And what happens then? The EPA explains: "Methylmercury exposure is a particular concern for women of childbearing age, unborn babies and young children, because studies have linked high levels of methylmercury to damage to the developing nervous system, which can impair children's ability to think and learn." That sort of sounds like something we should regulate, doesn't it?

The new rules would also have the effect of reducing fine particle pollution, which is a known source of many health problems, from asthma to heart attacks. In fact, the benefits of reduced fine particle pollution account for most of the quantifiable gains from the new rules. The key word here is "quantifiable": EPA's cost-benefit analysis only considers one benefit of mercury regulation, the reduced loss in future wages for children whose IQs are damaged by eating fish caught by freshwater anglers. There are without doubt many other benefits to cutting mercury

emissions, but at this point the agency doesn't know how to put a dollar figure on those benefits. Even so, the payoff to the new rules is huge: up to \$90 billion a year in benefits compared with around \$10 billion a year of costs in the form of slightly higher electricity prices. This is, as David Roberts of Grist says, a very big deal. And it's a deal Republicans very much want to kill.

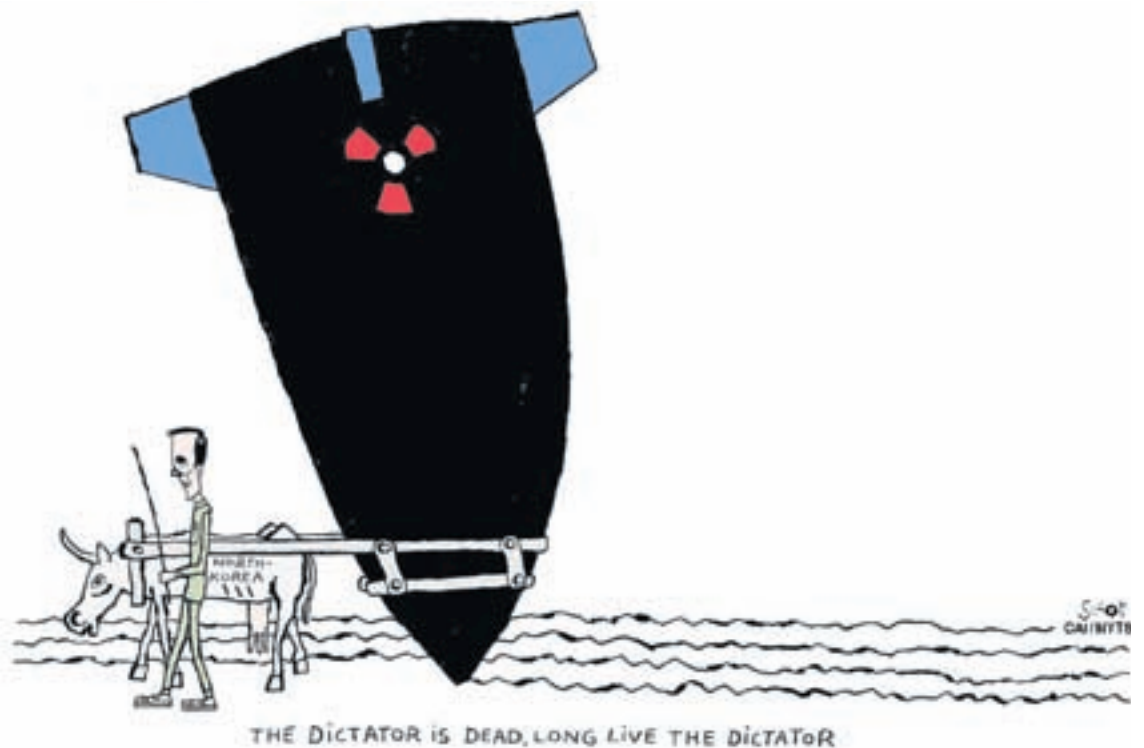
With everything else that has been going on in U.S. politics recently, the GOP's radical anti-environmental turn hasn't gotten the attention it deserves. But something remarkable has happened on this front. Only a few years ago, it seemed possible to be both a Republican in good standing and a serious environmentalist; during the 2008 campaign John McCain warned of the dangers of global warming and proposed a cap-and-trade system for carbon emissions. Today, however, the party line is that we must not only avoid any new environmental regulations but roll back the protection we already have.

And I'm not exaggerating: During the fight over the debt ceiling, Republicans tried to attach riders that, as Time magazine put it, would essentially have blocked the EPA and the Interior Department from doing their jobs.

Oh, by the way, you may have heard reports to the effect that Jon Huntsman is different. And he did indeed once say: "Conservation is conservative. I'm not ashamed to be a conservationist." Never mind: He, too, has been assimilated by the anti-environmental Borg, denouncing the EPA's "regulatory reign of terror" and predicting that the new rules will cause blackouts by next summer, which would be a neat trick considering that the rules won't even have taken effect yet.

More generally, whenever you hear dire predictions about the effects of pollution regulation, you should know that special interests always make such predictions and are always wrong. For example, power companies claimed that rules on acid rain would disrupt electricity supply and lead to soaring rates; none of that happened, and the acid rain program has become a shining example of how environmentalism and economic growth can go hand in hand.

But again, never mind: Mindless opposition to "job killing" regulations is now part of what it means to be a Republican. And I have to admit that this puts something of a damper on my mood: The EPA has just done a very good thing, but if a Republican — any Republican — wins next year's election, he or she will surely try to undo this good work. Still, for now at least, those who care about the health of their fellow citizens, and especially of the nation's children, have something to celebrate. □



Midlife crisis economics



DAVID BROOKS
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The members of the Obama administration have many fine talents, but making adept historical analogies may not be among them. When the administration came to office in the depths of the financial crisis, many of its leading figures concluded that the moment was analogous to the Great Depression. They read books about the New Deal and sought to learn from FDR. But, in the 1930s, people genuinely looked to government to ease their fears and restore their confidence. Today, Americans are more likely to fear government than be reassured by it. According to a Gallup survey, 64 percent of Americans polled said they believed that big government is the biggest threat to the country. Only 26 percent believed that big business is the biggest threat. As a result, the public has reacted to Obama's activism with fear and anxiety. The Democrats lost 63 House seats in the 2010 elections. Members of the administration have now dropped the New Deal parallels. But they have started making analogies between this era and the progressive era around the turn of the 20th century. Again, there are superficial similarities. Then, as now, we are seeing great concentrations of wealth, especially at the top. Then, as now, the professional class of lawyers, teachers and journalists

seems to feel as if it has the upper hand in its status war against the business class of executives and financiers. But these superficial similarities are outweighed by vast differences. First, the underlying economic situations are very different. A century ago, the U.S. economy was a vibrant jobs machine. Industrialization was volatile and cruel, but it produced millions of new jobs, sucking labor in from the countryside and from overseas. Today's economy is not a jobs machine and lacks that bursting vibrancy. The rate of new business start-ups was declining even before the 2008 financial crisis. Companies are finding that they can get by with fewer workers. As President Barack Obama has observed, factories that used to employ 1,000 workers can now be even more productive with less than 100. Moreover, the information economy widens inequality for deep and varied reasons that were unknown a century ago. Inequality is growing in nearly every developed country. According to a report from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, over the past 30 years, inequality in Sweden, Germany, Israel, Finland and New Zealand has grown as fast or faster than inequality in the United States, even though these countries have very different welfare systems. In the progressive era, the economy was in its adolescence and the task was to control it. Today the economy is middle-aged; the task is to rejuvenate it. Second, the governmental challenge is very different today than it was in the progressive era. Back then, government was small and there were few worker safety regulations. The problem was a lack of institutions. Today, government is large, and there is a thicket of regulations, torts and legal encumbrances. The problem is not a lack of institutions; it's a lack of institutional effectiveness. The Unit-

ed States spends far more on education than any other nation, with paltry results. It spends far more on health care, again, with paltry results. It spends so much on poverty programs that if we just took that money and handed poor people checks, we would virtually eliminate poverty overnight. In the progressive era, the task was to build programs; today the task is to reform existing ones. Third, the moral culture of the nation is very different. The progressive era still had a Victorian culture, with its rectitude and restrictions. Back then, there was a moral horror at the thought of debt. No matter how bad the economic problems became, progressive-era politicians did not impose huge debt burdens on their children. That ethos is clearly gone. In the progressive era, there was an understanding that men who impregnated women should marry them. It didn't always work in practice, but that was the strong social norm. Today, that norm has dissolved. Forty percent of American children are born out of wedlock. This sentences the United States to another generation of widening inequality and slower human capital development. One hundred years ago, we had libertarian economics but conservative values. Today we have oligarchic economics and libertarian moral values — a bad combination. In sum, in the progressive era, the country was young and vibrant. The job was to impose economic order. Today, the country is middle-aged but self-indulgent. Bad habits have accumulated. Interest groups have emerged to protect the status quo. The job is to restore old disciplines, strip away decaying structures and reform the welfare state. The country needs a productive midlife crisis. The progressive era is not a model; it is a foil. It provides a contrast and shows us what we really need to do. □

For New Year's, a bit fancy but all relaxed

DAVID TANIS

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Although it can be great fun to go out for New Year's Eve, this year I'm staying home. I'm not in the mood to fight the crowds, but I'll happily cook for a small group of friends and celebrate around the table for hours.

There's something kind of retro about New Year's Eve. So the menu should be somewhat classic, maybe even vaguely "Continental," with a nod to caviar and red meat.

The food, like the evening, should be a bit fancy but relaxed.

More to the point, the dinner needs to be festive but easily accomplished in a small kitchen, a great meal but with limited gymnastics.

You don't want to do much cooking once the guests arrive, so some do-ahead dishes are key.

You'll need some little snacks with aperitifs, but not too many.

Many old Parisian bistros serve good-quality plain salted potato chips, which are considered the perfect accompaniment to Champagne.

This French habit is well worth mimicking. Serve the chips in small bowls, silver if possible.

The pairing also works with cava and prosecco.

Other snacking choices are cheese straws, green olives, fennel slices and celery sticks. But of course a few raw oysters would never go amiss, if someone is handy with an oyster knife.

For a first course, a crisp salad of smoked sablefish, spiked with a mustard-horseradish cream made in advance and a generous spoonful of wild salmon caviar.

(Or upgrade to sturgeon caviar.) Garnished with endive, radish and watercress, it gets a spritz of lemon and a sprinkling of sea salt at the last minute.

The plate goes together quickly, yet wows.

For a main course, a version of steak au poivre made with meaty Muscovy duck breasts.

Cooked to a rosy medium-

rare, they are served with a tart red wine sauce and a buttery puree of celery

or other cold-smoked fish, about 6 ounces
3 Belgian endives, trimmed,



A dish of of chef David Tanis' Muscovy duck breasts with a tart red wine and a butter puree of celery root and potatoes, in New York. Tanis suggests that food on New Year's eve should be a bit fancy, but relaxed.

(Evan Sung/The New York Times)

root and potatoes. For the sauce, use the wine you'll drink. (If someone gives you a truffle, chop and add.)

Trim and season the duck up to a day ahead. Make the sauce ahead and re-heat it. Keep the puree warm in a double boiler.

Dessert is a bright, icy granita made from freshly squeezed tangerines. Served in wineglasses, it can be embellished with a splash of good bubbly or served as is.

It is astonishingly good, clean and light, and takes mere minutes to put together. Afterward, move on to more decadent purchased sweets, like fine chocolates or macarons.

Or bring out the dates and laughter, music and a lot of nonsense.

SMOKED FISH AND CAVIAR SALAD

Time: 20 minutes

6 ounces creme fraiche
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons grated horseradish
1/2 teaspoon grated lemon zest
2 teaspoons lemon juice
Pinch cayenne
Salt and pepper
12 slices smoked sablefish

in 1-inch diagonal slices
6 radishes, sliced thin
Small bunch watercress
1 tablespoon thinly sliced chives
6 lemon wedges
Fleur de sel or sea salt, for sprinkling
4 ounces wild salmon caviar or trout roe, about 6 tablespoons.

1. In a small bowl, whisk together the creme fraiche, Dijon mustard, horseradish, lemon zest, lemon juice, cayenne and a little salt and pepper. Thin the sauce with a few drops more lemon juice or cold water if necessary.
2. Spread 2 tablespoons

sauce on each of 6 chilled salad plates. Top with 2 slices smoked sablefish. Garnish each plate with sliced endive and radishes, a few watercress sprigs, a sprinkling of chives and a lemon wedge. Season the raw vegetables with a little fleur de sel or sea salt. Spoon 1 tablespoon wild salmon caviar or trout roe in the center of each salad. Squeeze lemon juice over at the table.

Yield: 6 servings.

PEPPERED DUCK BREAST WITH RED WINE SAUCE

Time: 1 1/2 hours

3 Muscovy duck breasts, about 1 pound each

Salt

1 tablespoon freshly crushed black peppercorns

4 garlic cloves, sliced



A dish of chef David Tanis' crisp salad of smoked sablefish, spiked with a mustard-horseradish cream and a spoonful of wild salmon caviar, in New York.

(Evan Sung/The New York Times)

Thyme sprigs

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 large shallot, sliced

1 tablespoon tomato paste

1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons medium-bodied red wine

2 cups unsalted chicken broth

1 tablespoon cognac or brandy

2 teaspoons potato starch.

1. Remove the tenderloins, thin strips of meat on undersides of the duck breast, and reserve for the sauce. With a sharp knife, trim away any gristle from the undersides and trim any excess fat from the edges of the breasts.

Score the skin in a diamond-shaped pattern, without cutting to the meat.

Lightly sprinkle salt on both sides, then rub 1 teaspoon crushed black peppercorns all over. Sprinkle with the garlic and a few thyme sprigs, cover, and leave at room temperature for an hour. (For deeper flavor, refrigerate for several hours or overnight, then return to room temperature to cook.)

2. Heat 1 tablespoon of the unsalted butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Add the shallot and the reserved duck tenderloins; let them brown well, stirring occasionally, 5 to 8 minutes. Stir in the tomato paste and a small thyme sprig and let them fry for a minute, then add 1/4 cup wine and the chicken broth.

Raise the heat to a brisk simmer and let the liquid reduce to about 1 1/4 cups, about 10 minutes.

Strain the sauce and return to the heat. Add the remaining 2 tablespoons red wine and the cognac or brandy and cook for 1 minute more.

Dissolve potato starch in 2 tablespoons cold water, then stir into sauce. Whisk in the remaining 1 tablespoon butter.

Taste and add salt as necessary. (Sauce may be made in advance and reheated, thinned with a little broth.)

3. Remove and discard the garlic and thyme sprigs from the breasts.

Heat a large heavy-bottomed skillet over medium-high heat. When the pan is hot, lay in the duck breasts skin side down and let them sizzle.

Lower the heat to medium and cook for a total of 7 minutes, checking to make sure the skin isn't browning too quickly.

With tongs, turn the breasts over and let them cook on the bottom side, 3 minutes for rare, 4 to 5 minutes for medium-rare.

Transfer to a warm platter and let rest for 10 minutes. Slice crosswise, not too thickly, at a slight angle. Serve with the sauce.

Yield: 6 servings. □